



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



CHARM AND COURTESY
IN
LETTER-WRITING

F. B. CALLAWAY

CORBIT LIBRARY

OF

ODESSA, DELAWARE

School Districts Nos. 61 and 61½

John A. ...

Class *808* Book *C13C*

Accession *1397*

20-

(not in OCLC)



PRESENTED IN MEMORY OF
ANNIE NELSON BAILEY, 1866-1919
BY HER SON THOMAS A. BAILEY, '24, AND
HIS WIFE SYLVIA DEAN BAILEY, TO THE
STANFORD UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

7

CHARM AND COURTESY
IN
LETTER-WRITING

BY
FRANCES BENNETT CALLAWAY

Dumb messages that plead for love and look for recompense.—William Shakespeare.

NEW YORK:
DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY.
1895.

Copyright, 1895, by
Frances Bennett Callaway.

THE CAXTON PRESS
NEW YORK

Preface.

To those letter-writers who regard the warm motive of the heart of more value than the outside form, who believe "the inside of the letter to be the cream of the correspondence," this book is commended by the author.

~~_____~~

1
1
1

1 1

...

Contents.

PART I.

	PAGE.
CHAPTER I. Ideas and Impressions . . .	3
Selections From the Letters of James Russell Lowell . . .	17
CHAPTER II. Beginnings of Letters . . .	27
CHAPTER III. Style	37
Selections From the Letters of Madame de Vence . . .	47
CHAPTER IV. Courtesy in Letters . . .	53
Letter of Dr. Doddridge to Mrs. Wingate . . .	68
CHAPTER V. Apologies	79
CHAPTER VI. The Dry Letter	91
CHAPTER VII. The Sympathetic Letter . . .	103
Selections From the Letters of John Greenleaf Whittier . . .	112
CHAPTER VIII. Picture Letters	117
Selections From the Letters of George Eliot	127
CHAPTER IX. The Lugubrious Letter . . .	133
CHAPTER X. The Mischief-making Letter . .	147
Selections From the Letters of Prince Bismarck	157

	PAGE.
CHAPTER XI. Remember Me . . .	. 163
Letter of Samuel Johnson to Mrs. Thrale . . .	. 170
CHAPTER XII. Silent Conversations . .	. 173
The Winthrop Letters . .	. 181
CHAPTER XIII. Adieu	. 189

PART II.

Characteristic Letters.

Michael Angelo to Vasari	. 201
Sir Philip Sidney to Languet	. 203
Extracts From the Letters of Eugenie de Guerin	. 207
Robert Schumann to His Mother	. 212
Sydney Smith to His Wife	. 217
Letters of Robert Burns	. 220
Mrs. Carlyle to ———	. 227
Eliza Southgate to Moses Porter . . .	. 230
Nathaniel Hawthorne to Sophia Peabody . .	. 235
Charles Kingsley to Mr. Wood	. 239
William M. Thackeray to Mrs. Brookfield . .	. 242
Washington Irving to Mr. Hoffman . . .	. 246

Part I.

Ideas and Impressions.

How much we get out of life depends upon how much we see in it.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

“To love something that is different from one’s self, a flower, a star, a human soul, what power is in it, what stir of all our faculties.”

What we see here is but an expression of God’s will, so to speak—a beautiful earth, and sky, and sea—beautiful affections and sorrows, wonderful changes and developments of creation, suns rising, stars shining, birds singing, clouds and shadows changing and fading, people loving each other, smiling and crying . . .

And who is to say that we are to ignore all this and not value them and love them.

THACKERAY’S LETTERS.

CHAPTER I.

BEFORE the beginning is the idea, and back of a man's letters is his life. As letters are the expression of life, the first thing to do is to make the life rich in every possible way. A man must be sensitive to impressions; he must have ideas; he must be interesting to himself before he can become interesting to other people, either in his conversation or letters.

To one who goes to work with an earnest purpose to make life interesting, the world has doors opening on every side—through books, music, art, science, travel, society. We are constantly gathering new ideas and fresh beautiful impressions in the varied experiences of every-day human intercourse, and nature has her

pockets stuffed full of queer and delightful things for those who will only take the trouble to give a friendly glance. To gather some new idea every day, be it only the shaping of a leaf, the trembling of a star, or the beading of a cobweb, is to make one's life richer and broader. In a blade of grass we trace our thoughts after God's thoughts, in a wild flower the Divine may rush in upon us.

The student will do well to keep a little note-book, writing in it every day something of interest he has seen or heard. One who has never kept such a book can hardly imagine how interesting it may become with its studies of bees, birds, butterflies, trees, studies in June, garden studies, sunset studies, autumn studies, and most fascinating of all, studies from human nature. Nothing can be more entertaining than human nature, if one only looks for the bright and humorous side of it. By all means keep a page for sunshine studies, under which

write down some pleasant happenings of the day.

One student wrote as a sunshine study—"The pleasant way in which her sister said 'Thank you.'" Another put down, "The song of a bird." Another, "A kind look." Nothing gives more liveliness to a letter or to a conversation than constantly to cultivate this habit of looking on the bright side of life.

In this note-book, let the student keep in mind that he is not writing lofty essays or fine rhetorical exercises—he is simply noting down in the plainest, clearest words, what he sees, feels, or hears. This practice, if continued for any length of time, will give ease of expression, just as technical exercises in music or painting give ease or grace of touch.

Confide to this observation book fearlessly, as to a friend, your sincere thoughts, for the value of these observations lies in their absolute truthfulness. Look at the trees and sky with

your own eyes, and see whether they are green or blue or some other color. Listen with your own ears to the falling of the rain, the murmuring of the wind. Observe what a fine instrument of music a fir-tree may become. Study the voices of different people. A little volume might be written on this one subject alone, so interesting it is as a study. After using the old worn-out thoughts of other people, one will find fresh delight in writing as he comes to express his own individual thoughts, which are interesting because they are his own. But do not spend time writing *noctes ambrosiana* about self, rather let every observation be a door out of self.

It is marvelous how this power of observation may be quickened and strengthened by cultivation. It is said that while Charles Dickens and a friend were walking one day, they agreed to notice everything by the way. By actual count, Dickens saw nine times as much as his friend, be-

.

cause his powers of observation were quickened by long and constant practice.

As a musician's ear delights in delicate overtones and undertones and finely modulated passages of which others are perfectly unconscious, so the trained eye delights in gray filmy shadows within shadows, and lights within lights. An idle looker-on can tell you that this man's face is yellow, wrinkled, and ugly, but to the artist is suggested the weariness, the patience, the pathos of those lines of suffering in the old man's face. One sees simply the repulsive clay—the other with the insight that comes through long training and the finest feelings, discerns the soul.

"I didn't see anything when I went around the square," said a young girl, "because I didn't think."

Nothing could have been more true. How many go through the world looking at things with absent-minded eyes, without thinking, and they never see

anything until it strikes them like a stick. We must look attentively, with present-minded eyes, until we have formed a clear image or picture in the mind, then it is easy to speak or write of what we have seen. "I looked twice," said a child, speaking of something interesting that she had seen, and her impression was a vivid one. A man like Charles Dickens, with a firm, penetrating attention, has so strengthened his memory and this image-making power of the mind that he compels our interest, making us see vividly and clearly the pictures he has seen. On the other hand, a man of feeble, flickering attention sees things in a fragmentary, accidental way, the image in his mind is imperfect and shadowy, and when he tries to speak or write, he is embarrassed and confused and cannot tell his story.

To cultivate quick perceptions and firm attention, to be awakened and interested and made sensitive to every sweet and delicate impression, a man

must first love something outside of himself. Then will he become sympathetic—then, and not till then, will all the faculties of mind and soul be stirred.

Amiel used to take his children into the garden every day and teach them to observe the flowers and insects, because he said it would make them more sympathetic. The more we know about any living thing, be it only an ant or snail, the broader will be our sympathies.

“A man who never sees a tree or a blade of grass, or stops still long enough to look into another human being’s eyes,” says Edward Sill, “how can he feel interested in anything I have to say.”

“I might mention all the charms of a bright spring day,” says George Eliot, “but if you had never in your life utterly forgotten yourself in straining your eyes after the mounting lark, in wandering through still lanes when freshly-opened flowers filled them with

a sacred, silent beauty—where would be the use of my descriptive catalogue. I could never make you know what I meant by a bright spring day.” In order to correspond with a friend, we must have some feelings and experience in common; some ideas that are at least related.

It is a well-known fact that we do not all see things alike, and that our individuality often colors the landscape. If joy is in a man's heart, the very rain-drops are shining and laughing like little faces of gladness, and even the clouds are rose-colored; if grief is in his heart, the whole world is discolored with gloom; if goodness dwells there, how swiftly he discovers and finds out goodness in other people; and if it be evil passion, it has become an old saying that we accuse others of the evil of which we are capable.

Mrs. Scrubaway, a notable house-keeper, who had always been used to keeping a sharp lookout for dirt, one day arrived in Venice. Taking pen,

ink and paper, she wrote home: "Oh, this dirty Venice. I feel all the time as if I wanted to go around with a mop-pail and scrubbing-brush and clean it up.

Mrs. Scrubaway sees what she has been looking for all her life, and she tells what she has seen in a plain way. Her letter is characteristic, and her friends enjoy the letter because it is Mrs. Scrubaway.

But with what different eyes Mrs. Browning sees Venice when she writes a letter:

VENICE, June 4.

"I have been between Heaven and Earth since our arrival at Venice. The Heaven of it is ineffable—never had I touched the skirts of so celestial a place. The beauty of the architecture, the silver trails of water up between all that gorgeous color and carving, the enchanting silence, the music, the gondolas—I mix all up together and maintain that nothing is like it,

nothing equal to it, not a second Venice in the world."

Delight in life is a quality of the heart and mind, and comes from the man himself and not from his surroundings. One man sees only black clouds and mud on a rainy day, but William Black, who is a sympathetic observer, rejoices in all the softened colors brought out in the trees and in the grays of the distance, in the hedges that have grown strong and dark under the gloom of the sky, in the light mists, in the faint streaks of sunshine that descend like a shimmering comb over the gloomy landscape.

Rosalind at boarding school was sent out to walk one fine autumn afternoon when the woods and fields were all aglow with beauty—but there was not a young man—not a shop-window on the landscape—accordingly Rosalind wrote home:

"The country is very dull. There is nothing to see."

John Ruskin taking a walk along just such a country road, noticed that every little pool reflected in its heart a bit of heaven. It is hard to keep a man out of heaven when he finds it everywhere around him. John Burroughs, who can see the most wonderful things in an ordinary strip of woodland, says love is the secret of it all—he first has the bird or the flower in his heart, and afterwards it is a small matter to find it in the field.

In studying the lives of great men and women, we find their letters exceedingly rich and precious because they have learned to hear and see and feel with mind and heart; they listen for the music of wind and water and human voices; they see the infinite beauty blooming in their own garden spots; or sparkling in the splendor of moon and stars above their own doorsteps. They appreciate with quick, responsive sympathy the beauty and fullness of other lives, feel every touch of goodness, patience, gentleness, the

faintest reflection of the Divine in the human heart, and their conversation, whether written or spoken, is always a delight and an inspiration.

In conclusion, the secret of writing a good letter is to make the life rich, and to pour the riches of life into one's letters. Art is the distillation of life.

BIBLIOGRAPHY. — Among the best books to stimulate observation are "*Modern Painters*," John Ruskin; "*Wake Robin*," "*Locusts and Wild Honey*," and "*Signs and Seasons*," John Burroughs; "*My Garden Acquaintance*," James Russell Lowell; "*A Summer in My Garden*," Charles Dudley Warner; Emerson's "*Essay on Nature*," Burns; *Selections of Wordsworth's Poems made by Matthew Arnold in the Golden Treasury Series*; "*How to Know the Wild Flowers*," Dana.

**Selections from the Letters of James
Russell Lowell.**

Few men were ever more swiftly responsive to all the beauties of outward nature than James Russell Lowell. "The flowering of the buttercups," he writes, "is a great, and I may say a truly religious event in my year." Few people were ever made so happy by the singing of birds; and the trees are his life-long friends. "Good heavens," he writes in one letter, "of what uncostly material is our earthly happiness composed—if we only knew it! What incomes have we not had from a flower, and how unfailing are the dividends of the seasons." In the following letter to his nephew Charles, he urges upon him the importance of learning how to observe:

ELMWOOD, June 11, 1849.

I am very glad to hear that you are enjoying yourself so much, and also

that the poor musquash dug faster than you did. I was not so long ago a boy as not to remember what sincere satisfaction there is in a good ducking, and how the spirit of maritime adventure is ministered to by a raft which will not float. I congratulate you on both experiences.

And now let me assume the privilege of my uncleship, to give you a little advice. Let me counsel you to make use of all your visits to the country, as opportunities for an education, which is of great importance, which town-bred boys are commonly lacking in, and which can never be so cheaply acquired, as in boyhood. Remember that a man is valuable in our day for what he *knows*, and that his company will always be desired by others in exact proportion to the amount of intelligence and instruction he brings with him. I assure you that one of the earliest pieces of definite knowledge we acquire after we become men, is this—that our company will be desired no

longer than we honestly pay our proper share in the general reckoning of mutual entertainment. A man who knows more than another, knows *incalculably* more, be sure of that, and a person with eyes in his head, cannot look even into a pig-sty without learning something that will be useful to him at one time or another. Not that we should educate ourselves for the mere selfish sake of that advantage of superiority which it will give us. But knowledge is power in this noblest sense, that it enables us to *benefit* others, and pay our way honorably in life by being of *use*.

Now, when you are at school in Boston, you are furnishing your brain with what can be obtained from books. You are training and enriching your intellect. While you are in the country you should remember that you are in the great school of the senses. Train your eyes and ears. Learn to know all the trees by their bark and leaves, by their general shape and manner of

growth. Sometimes you can be able to say positively what a tree is *not* by simply examining the lichens on the bark, for you will find that particular varieties of lichen love particular trees. Learn also to know all the birds by sight, by their notes, by their manner of flying; all the animals by their general appearance and gait, or the localities they frequent.

You would be ashamed not to know the name and use of every piece of furniture in the house, and we ought to be as familiar with every object in the world, which is only a larger kind of house. You recollect the pretty story of Pizarro and the Peruvian Inca: how the Inca asked one of the Spaniards to write the word *Dio* (God) upon his thumb-nail, and then, showing it to the rest, found only Pizarro unable to read it! Well, you will find as you grow older that this same name of God is written all over the world in little phenomena that occur under our eyes every moment, and I confess that I

feel very much inclined to hang my head with Pizarro when I cannot translate these hieroglyphics into my own vernacular.

“Now, I write all this to you, my dear Charlie, not in the least because it is considered proper for uncles to bore their nephews with musty moralities and advice; but I should be quite willing that you should think me a bore, if I could only be the means of impressing upon you the importance of *observing* and the great fact that we cannot properly observe till we have learned *how*. Education, practice, and especially a determination not to be satisfied with remarking that side of an object which happens to catch our eye first when we first see it, these gradually make an observer. The faculty once acquired, becomes at length another sense, which works mechanically.

I think I have sometimes noticed in you an *impatience* of mind which you should guard against carefully. Pin

this maxim up in your memory, that Nature abhors the credit system, and that we never get anything in life till we have paid for it. Anything good I mean; evil things we always pay for afterwards, and always when we find it hardest to do it. By paying for them, of course I mean *laboring* for them. Tell me how much good solid *work* a young man has in him and I will erect a horoscope for him, as accurate as Guy Mannering's for young Bertram. Talents are absolutely nothing to a man except he have the faculty of work along with them. They, in fact, turn upon him and worry him as Actaeon's dogs did—you remember the story? Patience and perseverance—these are the sails, and the rudder even, of genius, without which it is only a wretched hulk upon the waters.

It is not fair to look a gift-horse in the mouth, unless, indeed, it be a wooden horse, like that which carried the Greeks into Troy; but my lecture on patience and *finish* was apropos of

your letter, which was more careless in its chirography and (here and there) in its composition than I liked. Always make a thing as good as you can. Otherwise, it was an excellent letter, because it told what you had seen and what you were doing—certainly better as a *letter* than this of mine, which is rather a sermon. But read it, my dear Charlie, as the advice of one who takes a sincere interest in you. I hope to hear from you again, and my answer to your next shall be more entertaining.

In the following letter to a friend, in which he finds “the balancing of a yellow butterfly over a thistledown spiritual food and lodging for a whole forenoon,” we feel the poet’s whole nature vibrating to the slightest touch of beauty:

CAMBRIDGE, Sept. 16, 1856.

I have just come in from a walk up the little lane that runs down behind

the mill to Fresh Pond. It is one of the few spots left *something* like what it was when I was a boy, and I can pick hazelnuts from the same bushes which brought me and the chipmunks together thirty years ago. I really think it is bad for our moral nature here in America that so many of the links that bind us to the past are severed in one way or another, and am grateful for anything that renews in me that capacity for mere delight which made my childhood the richest part of my life. It seems to me as if I had never seen nature since those old days when the balancing of a yellow butterfly over a thistledown was spiritual food and lodging for a whole forenoon. This morning I have had it all over again. There were the same high-heaped shag bark trees, the same goldenrods and wide-eyed asters, the same heavy-headed goatsbeard, the same frank blue sky, the same cloud-shadows I used to race with, the same purple on the western hills, and as I

walked along, the great-grandchildren of the same metallic devil's-darning-needles slid sideways from the path and were back again as soon as I had passed. Nature has not budged an inch in all these years, and meanwhile over how many thistles have I hovered and thought I was—no matter what; it is splendid, as girls say, to dream backward so. One feels as if he were a poet, and one's own *Odyssey* sings itself in one's blood as he walks. I do not know why I write this to you so far away, except that as this world goes it is something to be able to say, "I have been happy for two hours." I wanted to tell you, too, what glorious fall weather we are having, clear and champagny, the northwest wind crisping Fresh Pond to steel-blue, and curling the wet lily-pads over till they bloom in a sudden flash of golden sunshine. How I love the earth! I feel it thrill under my feet. I feel somehow as if it were conscious of my love, as if something passed into my dancing

blood from it, and I get rid of that dreadful duty feeling—"what right have I to it?"—and not a golden-rod of them all soaks in the sunshine or feels the blue currents of the air eddy about him more thoughtlessly than I.

I wish I could reach you a cup of this wine over those briny leagues. I drink your health in it, and then the glass shatters, as usual.

Beginnings of Letters.

If you could have seen the golden heaven that deepened in the little mill-pond just before we arrived at Sleeghts! 'Twas like the heart of a poet, no bigger than another's, but capable of holding so much!

There's a blue-bird warbling. God bless him. 'Tis the best news this many a day.

There never *is* such a season, and that shows what a poet God is. He says the same thing over to us so often, and always new.

Wishing to disburthen ourselves, we find ourselves confused, not knowing where to begin.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

CHAPTER II.

WILLIAM SHENSTONE writes to his friend, Richard Jago:

“Could I with convenience mount my horse and ride to Harbury this instant, I should much more willingly do so than begin this letter.”

This impatient writer longed for the friendly stimulus of hand-clasp, voice and smile to enable him to begin conversation. There are moods when, without some such friendly help, we are utterly unable to draw out our thoughts. We are conscious that the brightest wit, the clearest ideas, the most amusing fancies, might be awakened by some light touch of enchantment, but where is the magician to say “Open Sesame.” The story is told of a young man who had great difficulty in beginning a letter to his friends at home:

"What is the matter?" inquired a companion.

"I have nothing to say," was the melancholy reply.

"Then say nothing," advised the unsympathetic friend.

The young man, no doubt, had much in his heart to say to his friends, but could not find his way to it.

"Fool, look into your own heart and write," says Sir Philip Sidney, but unfortunately, this is what the fool is not able to do.

A man's own mind is often like one of those netted purses with no visible opening, and the greatest puzzle to himself is to find the way into it. In conversation, a friend who has tact will pull every silken string of mind and imagination with delicate questionings, and help him to bring out surprising treasures. Even more, the same eloquent eyes and lips that assist him to find such coins of wit, memory, and judgment, will appreciate them at once and give

him their value in wonder and admiration.

How different is the case in letter-writing. Timid and alone, you must loosen the knots of your own thought with the miserable assurance that however sweet the fancy or precious the wisdom you spend on paper, it will be weeks, months, perhaps even years, before it receives recognition.

It is better never to regard letter-writing as a matter of duty or recompense, but rather as an expression of love and endearment. Think of your friend's need of sympathy, comfort, and affection, and spend freely, gladly, without stint, all the riches of your heart. A deep feeling either of joy or sorrow will loosen restraint, but nothing helps so mightily to unpack one's heart of words, as the generous emotions of delight and love. Longfellow writes to his friend: "And now open your heart, and hold it open by the four corners while I pour into it 'all thoughts, all passions, all delights,'

which fill my own." In such a mood it is easy enough to begin a letter.

Observe the letters of polished writers, how gracefully and easily they open conversation:

Dearest Charlotte:

I received your very agreeable letters, and hasten to give you my most hearty thanks. . .

WILLIAM HUMBOLDT.

Dear Sir:

I write to you with the same warmth, the same zeal of good will and friendship with which I used to converse with you two years ago, and cannot think myself absent when I feel you so much, at my heart. . .

ALEXANDER POPE.

"My real, friendly Friend:

Your last letter came to my door, was welcomed, has told its tale. It was a funny letter, a pleasing, charming, teasing, provoking, wicked letter." . . .

“ I was sitting on the veranda this morning, enjoying the sweet air, the low, musical hum of bees in the apple blossoms, and thinking of you when your letter come.”

“ In the gray twilight of this wintry afternoon, I turn to your last unanswered letter with the feeling of warmest friendship.”

Here is no jar of affectation, no trumpet-like flaring of compliments, but simply the natural expression of the kindest feeling of the heart.

Eugenie de Guerin opens her heart like a child:

“ Here I am, dear friend, before a little lamp, leaning on a little table. . . and thinking of you.”

Beethoven begins a letter to his Pastor Amenda with the warmth and fervor of his own music:

“ My Dear, My Good Amenda, My Warm Hearted Friend:”

When Madame de Sévigné writes to her daughter, her first words of greeting have the tenderness of an embrace:

“AUX ROCHERS, Sunday, 15 September.

How my heart is indebted to you, and how you have put it to rest by giving me leave to hope for this autumn. I have reread many times this amiable letter, that I wished for so tenderly, and I have said, “This is my child who speaks to me.”

Frances Kemble begins a letter to her friend with as much ease and lightness as a bird takes wing:

“My dearest H—

I have this instant received your letter, and contrary to John's wise rule of never answering an epistle till three days after he receives it, I sit down to write, to talk, to be with you.”

Dr. Delany writes:

“I am set down, my dear sister, with the worst pen and ink in the world, but with the best good will to write to you.”

Prince Bismarck writes with friendly good humor to his friend Motley:

“Dear Motley—

Your writing to me was one of the best ideas that you have had for a long time, and you are certain to have many good ones.”

Jane Carlyle writes impetuously, just as she would speak:

“Your letter was one of the letters that one feels a desire to answer the instant one has done reading it. An out-of-the-heart letter that one’s own heart, if one happens to have one, jumps to meet.”

In contrast, is the gentle dignity of the Baroness de Bunsen, but what depth of feeling is revealed in her words:

“It is more affecting to me than I can express to receive your precious words in your own beautiful handwriting, and I love to fancy that your own spirit of love and peace is exhaled and inhaled for my benefit.”

Style.

You have the art of writing just the sort of letters I care for, sincere letters, like your own talk.

GEORGE ELIOT.

How rare in printed literature are the qualities we often find in woman's letters, the wit, the grace, the daring, the evasiveness, the lyric glimpses.

T. W. HIGGINSON.

Your letter was your self all over. You stood before me laughing and talking, rushing from fun to earnest as usual, diplomatically playing with your veil; in short, the letter was Clara herself—her double.

ROBERT SCHUMANN.

I thank you for your frequent letters. By this you do all you can to be in my company. The moment I open your letters I see Lucillius before me.

SENECA.

•

CHAPTER III.

A MAN'S style in a letter is the revelation of himself. When we wish a faithfully true estimate of a man's character, we not only read his life, but we study his letters. If he was honest, unselfish, loving, we will find in his letters, simplicity, tenderness, affection, for nothing reveals a man's character more plainly than letters to his own familiar friends. Dr. Johnson writes to Mrs. Thrale—"In a man's letters, you know, madam, his soul lies naked."

A charming letter-writer once had occasion to read some of her own early letters written to a friend. As she turned with lingering glances the faded and yellow pages, she exclaimed with wonder—"I see my girlhood as in a mirror." She had not realized the power she possessed of reflecting her

life in her letters, or that a letter could be an apparition of herself.

"Tell me all about yourself," Irving entreats of a friend, "your occupations, your amusements, all that you see and think and feel; let me have as much of yourself as possible, that I may feel we are not severed in spirit by the distance." We like Thoreau's letter to his mother, in which he begins to ask directly about seven-year locusts, and Mendelssohn's birthday letter opening with a few bars of music. They are characteristic of themselves.

It is the portrait, the resemblance of a friend in her letter that makes it dear. It must recall the charm of her presence, it must laugh and talk and rush from fun to earnest, and be herself all over, as Schumann says to Clara Wieck.

"To fill up a corner," says Burns, "e'en put down a laugh at full length."

"Oh, that I could write a sigh," complains an old love-letter.

A witty girl who had been told that

she could use a fine style in writing letters if she would, writes naïvely:

“My own Auntie, there is no one in the world to whom I would care so much to write a beautiful, straight-lined epistle as to you, but Auntie, if you should get that kind from me you would be so dispirited and lonely when you had finished reading it. You would look in vain through every page for *me*, and you would find a lot of dry little thoughts, arranged in stiff, unbending little jackets, and you would cry, “Oh, give me back my scrambly Kitty.”

It is this “*me*,” this personality, that we all long for in a friend’s letter, and when that is missing, no wonder if we are dispirited and lonely. As for Kitty—so bright, so witty a girl will not long remain “scrambly,” but will use every means within her power to acquire a mastery of pure and forceful English in order that her letters may express her finest and best personality.

“Genuine refinement of style,” says

Bancroft, "comes from the being of the writer and is not an affair of words." The best letter-writers are always simple, cordial and unaffected in their style. Eugénie de Guérin, so pure and refined in her taste, writes with the most transparent clearness. William Cowper hates all fine affectation, and uses fine, simple English words, relating the commonplace events of everyday life with a sweet, delicate humor playing through them all like sunshine on a clear and pebbled stream. Charles Lamb writes as if he were having a cozy chat with his friend at his elbow. Madame de Sévigné charms us with her piquant simplicity.

"Your health, your family, your least action, your sentiments, your bubbles from Lambesc—these are what really touch me," she exclaims in one letter, and believing her daughter to be of her own mind, she relates in generous confidence the simplest affairs of her life. Her letters are

sweet and rich to the taste, not only in fine sentences flashing with diamonds and the "gilt gold embroidered stuffs," but because of the "gray and brown thoughts at bed-time," the "muscats that are like drops of amber, only delectable."

We cannot all talk with such ease and swiftness as Madame de Sévigné, and many a poor heart has lost a kingdom of happiness by lacking this grace in a letter. To be painfully awkward and shy does not prove any lack of feeling, however, for the deepest, most delicate emotion is often the most difficult to express in words, as in sounds or colors. A musician will sometimes study for years before he can interpret the delicate shades of his own thoughts in music, and the letter-writer often finds it requires an equal effort to attain the inexplicable result of throwing feeling into words.

It was said of Mrs. Browning, that her letters were "really talk, fireside talk." When friends can draw so near

to each other as to really talk in their letters, the charm of correspondence is irresistible.

As a letter is but written conversation, it is best to use "talking words." Avoid as far as you can the long high-sounding dignities, and cherish the little plain words, whose crystal honesty will shed their own lustre upon your thought. Accomplished letter-writers know by intuition that subtle, flame-like feeling requires the simplest, most flexible words.

How clear and chaste is Josephine's language, and yet how warm her feeling when she writes:

"There are sentiments which are even life, and which can only pass away with life."

Richard Steele wrote such delicious love-letters to his wife, that it is said every woman ought to think of him with tenderness. He wrote just as if he were talking.

"Dear Prue:

I am very sleepy and very tired, but

could not think of closing my eyes until
I have told you, I am, dearest creature,

Your most affectionate and faithful
husband,

RICH. STEELE.

From the press, one in the morning."

It was Steele who said, "There is no
rule in the world to be made for writing
letters, but that of being as near what
you speak face to face as you can."

Open your heart to your friend in
the clearest, simplest words, for speech
must hold thought, as crystal contains
wine, but never obscure it. It is sym-
pathy, kind feeling, affection, your
friend hungers and thirsts for, and get-
ting that divine cordial, the shape of
the cup which holds it is not of much
account.

The Indian Pundita Ramabeiya
received the following letter from her
little daughter. In six words the child
says everything.

"Dear Mamma,
I love you,

MANO."

BIBLIOGRAPHY.—To cultivate a pure taste in writing letters, it would be helpful to read the letters of *Madame de Sévigné*; *Eugénie de Guérin*; *William Cowper*; *Charles Lamb*; *Mrs. Delaney*; *Baroness de Bunsen*; *Augustus and Maria Hare*; *Charles Kingsley*, *Washington Irving*; *John Greenleaf Whittier*; *Knight's "Half Hours With The Best Letter-Writers."* "*Old Love Letters*," *Richardson*.

**Selections from the Letters of Madame
de Vence.**

The following letters from Madame de Vence to her mother are as tender, sympathetic and gay as if she were really talking. Madame de Vence was the great-granddaughter of Madame de Sévigné, and her letters afford a remarkable illustration of an inherited talent.

VENCE, 4 August, 1730.

Oh, you write me twice a week, do you, madame, while I write you only once! A pretty thing for you to say, but it shall make no difference about my Fridays. We are busy people here, however, and have other things to do beside stitching and paying epistolary compliments. For, resolve as you will, madame, you know that you find me irresistibly, and you flatter me, up and down, and round and about, until you can do no more. But I, who am very self-conscious, especially

since the weather became so hot!—I take the greatest precaution, and look well to all my letters; and I'll be hanged if *I love you* occurs a single time. What do you suppose I have been doing all this week, madame? I have been pondering that rag of a stocking-heel which you sent me, and which cost me fifty thousand crowns for carriage. Not that I would reproach you, madame, the expense is a bagatelle.

. . . . Your theological friend sends you his respects, and is delighted that you propose knitting some stockings for him. You will have to set them up on three needles with four stitches on a needle; widening seventy-four stitches on the first half of the leg, and so on in proportion, until you reach the foot, which must be knitted on four needles, with forty-three stitches to the needle. Not that his foot and leg are ill-shaped, but he has a fancy for having his stockings made so. Yours will be finished very soon.

. All the house, my turret included, presents its respects to you, and I mine to whoever may chance to be with you, always provided they are occupying the sofa! Otherwise I say nothing. You are longing for the month of November, you say, madame. How droll! I too, I do assure you, experience something of the nature of a desire,—and will it not be fun? Adieu, then, madame,—adieu, my own dear mamma! On my word, I love you with my whole heart. Ah, what have I said! Well, it must stand, but don't tell anyone, or I shall die of shame!

22 September, 1730.

How sweet it was of my brother Sinety, dear mamma, to forego the pleasure of your society, and to stop over for a whole day in order to give me news of you! This is the sort of favor I never forget, because sometimes I have the misfortune—and I know none greater—of not hearing my mamma so much as mentioned for a

week at a time. So madame is giving parties, which is very proper of madame; and I should like to be with madame when madame does that sort of thing, and also when she does not; for 'tis a great pleasure to be with madame. We must be patient until November, but, dear, dear! it is very cruel to think of a whole long month and a half to be gotten through before I spring into the arms of a mother who is good enough to love me with all my faults. Until that day arrives, pray continue to support me, as heretofore, by letters flowing with milk and honey, and by the assurance that you are well; for, madame, you have not said one word upon that subject. . . . For my part, I tell you everything, and you must know a great deal more about my health than I know myself.

In a quarter of an hour my children are all to be whipped for having broken a looking-glass which I gave them. The bishop remarked yesterday that if I failed to mention him in

every one of my letters to you he should quarrel with me. The Abbé Fort also desires his very, very humble compliments. Permit me to present mine to your circle. . . . Adieu, dear mamma. Rest assured that no one will ever love you as devotedly as I do. I know that I am speaking the truth, because I am sensible of loving you to distraction, and they say one can do more.

6 October, 1730.

So you are going to Aix, madame, and perhaps you are already there. I should really like to know if you are still lodging in the house of M. du Muy. I should be delighted to find you on the same floor as myself; and that for reasons which you might discern without an opera-glass. . . And I shall see you. What joy! I laugh all by myself when I think of it. I am so pleased. We will knit stockings together, and in short amuse ourselves like queens!

Adieu, Madame! I love you with all

my heart, if you will permit me so to express myself, but my chief desire is to say so face to face. I had not previously mentioned it in my letter, and I feel a certain delicacy about doing so, arising from the softness of my heart, which might have caused me to succumb to an affection which might have degenerated into—in short, you you know what I mean.

Courtesy in Letters.

Expressions of sentiment have lost vitality and strength along with expressions of respect. Tenderness may sometimes be shown in modern letters but it is rare, and when it occurs is usually accompanied by a degree of familiarity our ancestors would have considered in bad taste.

PHILIP GILBERT HAMMERTON.

I hold as one of the most certain of all tenets, that no friends and very few acquaintances ever mean to affront or neglect one another.

MARY RUSSELL MILFORD.

“Life is not so short but there is always time for courtesy.”

Letters are intended as resemblances of conversation, and the chief excellencies of conversation are good humor and good breeding.

WALSH.

CHAPTER IV.

WE are never willingly unkind or discourteous in our letters; we never purposely affront or wound our fellow creatures, but in the hurry and confusion of our present living, we sometimes neglect those small, sweet courtesies that with such trifling cost make up life's wine and gold.

When sweet Dorothy Plompton writes to the good knight, her father, asking him to send her a hat and a kerchief, she addresses her letter:

“To the right worshipful and my most entyrelly beloved, good, kind father, Sir Robert Plompton.”

But such courtesy, so humble in reverence, so affectionate in regard, has almost faded from our remembrance, and in only some hidden package of yellow letters do we ever come upon such words as “Mine Own Right Be-

loved," "Most truly, your affectionate and obliged friend and servant."

"I have the honor to be your servant," were the courtly words of a chevalier, and a man ennobles his own soul who considers service to be an honor. It is this willingness to serve that lifts the poorest letter into an act of chivalry, and chivalry is the romance of friendship. The courteous gentleman who considers it an honor to serve his friend, will hardly send him a postal card to save himself the trouble of writing a respectful letter.

A lady once asked if it would be proper to say "Dear" on a postal card. To write a postal card is like screaming across the street. If John were across the street his friend would not scream, "Dear John!" She would simply shout, "John!" If she were truly courteous, she would not scream across the street, neither would she send a postal card. In sending messages upon business affairs, postal cards are convenient and useful, but in a

friendly correspondence it is always more courteous to use cards that may be sealed.

It is uncivil to use pale ink, and certainly unkind to write an illegible hand. To write in careless haste is simply to save our own time at the expense of the friend who is vexed to make out our meaning. As a girl once said of her father's rapid writing:

"Papa can write nineteen letters before breakfast, but it would take nineteen years to read them."

It is said of Dean Stanley that his writing was illegible to an extraordinary degree, a hand-writing which he could not read himself sometimes. Upon one occasion, Charles Kingsley received a letter from the Dean—Mrs. Kingsley at the time lay very ill. Kingsley opened the letter and examined it for many minutes in vain. At last he said:

"I have every reason to believe this is a very kind letter of sympathy from Stanley—I feel sure it is. Yet the

only two words I can even guess at are 'heartless devil.' But I pause—I pause to accept that suggestion as a likely one under the circumstances."

John Motley, speaking of the correspondence of John Van Olden Barneveld, "who had the ill luck to be decapitated," says; "If they had cut off his head on account of his abominable handwriting, no creature could have murmured at the decree who ever tried to read his correspondence."

Any sign of haste is discourteous in a friendly letter, and for this reason abbreviations are considered ill-mannered. To write "resp" for "respectfully" is about as respectful as slamming a door in one's face. To write "aff" for "affectionately" is not affectionate any more than is "dr" for "dear." "If the friend is dear at all," says Philip Hammerton, "why not take time to write out the whole word." Leaving out the subject of a sentence has the same discourteous air of haste as an abbrevia-

tion. While the feeling of the writer may be entirely kind, the impression given is that of rudeness.

Thomas Cholmondely was truly courteous when he signed his letter to a friend:

“Ever yours and not in haste.”

A letter that is slovenly in appearance has discourtesy written between every line. Speaking of this matter in one of his delightful letters to his betrothed, Leigh Hunt first reminds her gently that his faithful affection deserves some little sacrifice of her time and care, and then adds the following entreaty:

“Now, cannot you sit down on Sunday, my sweet girl, and write me a fair, even-minded, honest hand, unvexed with desperate blots or skulking interlineations? Mind, I do not quarrel with the contents or with the subject; what you tell me of others amuses me, and what you tell me of yourself delights me. It is merely the fashion of your lines; in short, as St.

Paul saith, "It is the *spirit* giveth life, but the *letter* killeth."

When Junius Keswick writes to his cousin, the author remarks:

"And Mr. Keswick, being the perfect gentleman that he was, spoke of his own affairs last."

It may be forgetfulness of true courtesy that leads us sometimes to speak of our own affairs first, and mention the health of a friend afterwards; or to put our love as an afterthought, into the postscript. Charles Lamb, perhaps, attained the height of discourtesy, when, having finished and sealed his letter, he sent regards to his friend's wife in a postscript on the outside.

"As for Fitz-Heron," complains Sybil, "he is so very selfish, he always wants his letters answered." How very human was poor Fitz-Heron. We all like some return for our letters. We want them answered.

It is well to remember that letter-conversations are made up of questions

and answers. To write a letter without putting in a single question, is a delicate way of dropping a correspondent. To write a letter without answering a single question, convinces your correspondent that he ought to drop you.

"Ah!" writes Joseph Ritson to his friend, "you are a clever fellow! After half a dozen attempts, you have at last given a precise answer to one-half of my questions, and to that half, too, which you might have easily guessed was of no sort of consequence to me."

"I have anxiously looked," says Körner to Schiller, "for a faithful reproduction of yourself in your letters. I have also awaited in vain for replies to questions I have put to you." Schiller was a poet, and could not be expected to remember to answer questions. Some people who are not poets, also have this same forgetful feeling when a correspondent has wearied them by asking an interminable number of useless questions.

It is a delicate mark of regard to study the taste of our correspondents—to humor their fancies—to write what they would delight to hear. Hannah More wanted the common-sense of her friend's life. Burns asked for "trifles, bagatelles, nonsense." One friend likes a pleasant, gossipy letter. Another is in need of just a few kindly words of sympathy to lie like a cordial in the heart.

When he was a lad in Boston, out of work and very homesick, Dr. Moody tells the story of how often he used to go to the post-office for letters. There was but one mail a day, but he used to go morning, noon and night, thinking his letter might have been overlooked or mislaid. He was fairly hungry for some word from home. At last, to his great delight, a letter came from his little sister, the first she had ever written in her life. He opened it eagerly, thinking, of course, it contained some home news, when to his utter disappointment, he found

the whole burden of the letter was "beware of pickpockets,"—advice entirely unnecessary, considering he had nothing in his pockets to pick.

A small boy, who had promised a letter to his aunt, began ruefully:

"Dear Aunt Belle:

If I had known how hard it would be to write you a letter, I should not have promised to do so."

This miserable little boy was not very courteous, but he certainly was truthful. Many of us would be more careful about promising to write letters if we considered that each letter takes just so much out of one's life. It is discourteous to extort a promise from a friend to write, whether he will or no, and it is unkind to keep a strict debit and credit account in this matter of letter-writing. Longfellow declares that this practice makes of him a perfect martyr, and Lowell says:

"I do not like shuttle-cock corre-

spondences. What is the use of our loving people, if they can't let us owe them a letter? If they can't be sure we keep on loving them if we don't keep sending an acknowledgment under our hands and seals once a month? As if there could be a statute of limitations for affection! The moment love begins to think of duty, he may as well go hang himself with his own bow-string."

We usually make the mistake of having too many correspondents, and finding an unending number of letters always to be answered, we are so weighed down by the burden, that we complain that we no longer have time for courtesy. It would be much more creditable to write three letters filled with kindly thought and cheer, than forty scrambling notes, lamenting that we have no time for either cheer or courtesy.

Courtesy does not require us to impoverish our lives with unworthy correspondences, neither does courtesy re-

quire us to write long letters, for one may be as courteous in a few words as in a whole volume. Courtesy does require us to answer with kind and thoughtful consideration those who in any way need the comfort of our letters. It is gloriously said of the Duke of Wellington, that the most ill-timed note from an old soldier who had served under him in the Waterloo Campaign was sure to receive a full and immediate answer. In contrast is a letter on exhibition in the Edinburgh Museum, from James Hogg, beginning:

“My dear Sir:

I rarely ever read, far less answer a letter.”

“That man,” said a friend to Phillips Brooks, “is a poor old crank. There is nothing for you to do but to throw his letter in the waste-basket.”

“That I will not do,” was the Bishop’s reply, “He has written me a

courteous letter and I am going to return him a courteous answer, like a gentleman."

When a great man is so entirely courteous, a stranger should have a feeling of delicacy about intruding upon his leisure without some very good reason; remembering that his time, so much needed for his special work in life, is constantly fretted away from him by letters of this kind. It is said of Longfellow that the mails brought him hundreds of letters asking for autographs, for criticisms, for original poems. To one from a school girl asking for a poem, he replied that he could not write it, but says this courteous, gentle-hearted man, "I tried to say 'No' so softly that she would think it was 'Yes.'"

It is no wonder that we find such notes as these in Longfellow's journal:

"I am plagued to death with letters from all sorts of people—of course about their own affairs. No hesita-

tion, no reserve, no consideration or delicacy. What people!"

"Letters, letters, letters; the whole day consumed with the business of other people. Good people, sweet people, have mercy!"

Some of the letters were absurd in their requests, but not many as exacting as this:

"Sir:—Inasmuch as I am preparing a treatise on American Literature, and desire to insert your name among the rest, you will much oblige by answering the following queries: When were you born? Where? Give your father's occupation, name, and circumstances, and your occupation in earlier life. State the various steps in gaining your education. Your first printed production. A list of your chief compositions, and the various little incidents of your life, which will tend to make a history interesting. Try and fill a foolscap sheet. I have the honor to be, sir,
Yours, etc."

Speaking of this matter of courtesy in a beautiful letter to his son Philip, Sir Henry Sidney said: "There is nothing that winneth so much with so little cost." And we read in times past how a kind and courteous letter has won almost everything from a heart to a kingdom.

"The secret of it all," says Thorold, Bishop of Rochester, "is to have a kind heart, to be willing to please." And we can all be kind—not only in writing letters to our friends, but in trusting their friendship when they do not write to us—trusting them to the world's end.

DR. DODDRIDGE TO MRS. WINGATE.

A most remarkable letter of courtesy was that written by Dr. Doddridge, telling an esteemed friend of her faults. What would have been brutal rudeness in a less chivalrous gentleman, is an act of the most gentle courtesy in Philip Doddridge. The lady has been telling him of his short-

comings, and with a sly twinkle of fun, he faithfully assures her that he means to keep pace with her in all such offices of friendship. He tells her that she is vain and proud, and the most remarkable egotist he has ever known; that she is fretful, peevish, jealous, bad-tempered, and altogether provoking. These, he assures her, are the only faults in her character, and he expresses himself with such a judicious mixture of praise, such naïve good humor and sincere friendliness—he bows himself out of her presence with such a graceful expression of admiration and tender regard, that we wonder if he has given her any reproof at all:

January 13, 1726.

Dear Madam:

You were so kind yesterday morning as to tell me of some things which you thought amiss in my behavior, many of which I own were very just, as upon a little reflection I plainly preceived; and am willing to believe the same of

others, where I am more in the dark, and can as yet recollect nothing in my behavior that could lay a just foundation for such charges. In most of the expressions of friendship, it is my misfortune to rank inferior to yourself, but in this I am resolved to keep pace with you; and though I may not be able to find out so many defects in your character as you have found in mine, I am determined to do my best, and tell you all that I know; to proceed any further would be calumny, and not friendship. In order to take off that air of rudeness which might otherwise appear in presuming to find fault with you I must do myself the justice to own that I steadily esteem your character to be far superior to mine in many important instances, and that, as to the infirmities of temper, which I am going to enumerate, I find them almost every one in myself, among many others from which you are entirely free. With this precaution I will go on to the enumeration of your faults,

which I hope will neither be defective nor extravagant in any considerable instance, for I have endeavored to recollect what I have found out when I have been angry, and, therefore, more quick-sighted; but I have judged of them, and do now mention them to you, in the most sedate composure and harmony of mind, and a heart full of the tenderest sentiments of friendship.

The most considerable fault of my good friend, and that to which most of the rest are reducible, is vanity. Few people in the world have so many fair excuses for it as yourself; and yet, what is, upon that very account, the more surprising, few discover more in every circumstance of life. It even constantly appears when we are drinking chocolate, and has spoiled the pleasure of many a dish, at least to me, if not to the rest of the company; though, after all, whether my uneasiness arose from good sense, or a severity toward pride, is what I am at

this moment very uncertain about. I own that I rather suspect it was owing to the latter feeling; and here I would observe that, as pride is the most conspicuous fault of two persons with whom you most intimately converse, so you must expect but little quarter from us, though, in justice, it ought to be otherwise; yet it is a fact, that pride hates that pride in another, which virtue and humility would disapprove. This vanity, madam, makes you one of the most remarkable egotists that I have ever known; whatever is defective in the character of others is generally reprov'd by telling the company how careful you have been to guard against it! And whatever is commendable, you inform us, and often without any mystery, that you are a bright example of! Though you frequently mention former mistakes, it is only a decent kind of preface by which you may introduce a declaration of your being grown wiser than you formerly were! Indeed, nothing is

easier than to accuse or even insult former self, if present self may but receive an accession of honor.

The inconveniences of this figure of speech are obvious enough, but there is one happy effect attending it, which people are not sufficiently sensible of; I mean that, by this means, vanity often talks itself into consumption; for it effectually stops the mouths of others who would be ready to praise us, if we would leave the work to their care; or it produces such direct compliments as are tantamount to the severest stabs of satire, and so are poisonous to our vanity, rather than its food.

An excess of jealousy is another imperfection which I have often observed in you as well as myself; by which, I mean only a disposition to be very much displeased with trifles which are not worth regarding at all. This, in a lady of so much good sense, is peculiarly remarkable, and an ill-natured world will be ready to gather argument from every brighter part of your

character to strengthen and aggravate this defect. The natural consequence of this morbid sensibility is a readiness to express the displeasure which arises upon mere trifles by fretful and impatient speeches. With due submission, madam, I think you are peculiarly obliged to be upon your guard against this, because I hardly know anybody whose temper inclines them more keenly to resent anything that looks like peevishness in others.

Now, it is obvious that if we cannot bear such kind of speeches, the best way to avoid hearing them is to take care never to indulge in them ourselves. Upon this occasion, madam, I must observe that you have often displayed your wisdom in an instance where mine constantly fails me. When you have said a hasty thing, and another answers with some smartness, you have known how, if not entirely to keep your own temper, which is by no means in your power, yet, at least, to smother that resent-

ment which would naturally arise upon such a provocation. But, even while you are attempting this, your prudence does sometimes remarkably fail you, for you cannot forbear triumphing over your antagonist, by saying that he is hot and fierce, and that you will not talk any more because he cannot bear it! This, madam, may be very true, but yet you know it is more provoking than anything that you could say; because it is glorying in your own superior wisdom, at the same time that you are exposing the imperfection of his temper, in an important instance.

However, you will have this consolation, that the rest of the company will perceive you are a sharer in the imperfection, though you do not know it, for they will naturally conclude that if you were not very angry, you would not have taken so unseasonable a time for reproving him. Another particular is, that, though you seem to take a reproof with more patience and thankfulness than any person of

your temper I ever met with in the whole course of my acquaintance, yet you sometimes attempt to defend, by charging the same failure upon the person who blames you. Methinks, madam, you should not stoop so low, unless it were to serve a particular friend; nay, even to such a one I would not repeat such a condescension, for it is natural to imagine that re-proofs that are given at such a time proceed from spleen and pride, rather than from wisdom and love; and, then, it is odd but your friend entirely despises your remarks; at least, it is certain he will not think himself at all obliged to you for them. Once more, madam, when you have contracted an aversion to any person, you are admirably ingenious in giving the most unlucky turn in the world to everything he says or does, and you are apt to allow yourself the liberty of censuring his character with the utmost severity. If such remarks come to the ear of a person who has the mis-

.

fortune to fall under your displeasure, it certainly provokes him, and makes him your determined enemy. In the meantime, is not a negligent egotism the least agreeable way of entertaining a company, which a lady of so much religion and good sense could possibly invent? Besides, when people imagine that your temper inclines you to aggravate faults to an excess, they will have the less regard for your judgment in those censures which are really equitable and rational.

These, madam, are, so far as I can recollect, the only faults I have ever observed in your behavior; and, I am ready to conclude there is a rational foundation for each of these reflections, because I perceive that the wisest and best of your friends, and those who most intimately know you, all agree in these sentiments. I thought it a more candid and generous part to mention them to you than to dwell upon them in the company of others, and am fully assured that you will

take it kindly. Their enumeration has been both a difficult and unpleasant task, but I find a sweetness in any trouble which may be serviceable to you, and I hope that what I have been doing will not be entirely useless to myself, since what I have said upon each of these heads will lay me under an additional obligation to avoid the faults which I undertake to censure. There is one immediate satisfaction attending the review of what I have written, which I will presume to mention, though perhaps, modesty would rather require me to conceal it. It is that I am encouraged to hope that I shall never want matter on any other subject, since I could write so large a letter upon a theme so barren in itself as the defects of Mrs. Wingate. I am with the utmost sincerity and respect,

Your very great admirer, your affectionate friend,

And obliged humble servant,

PHILIP DODDRIDGE.

Apologies.

If you visit your friend, why need you apologize for not having visited him, and waste his time and deface your own act. Visit him now. Let him feel that the highest love has come to see him, in thee, its lowest organ. Or why need you torment yourself and friend by secret self-reproaches that you have not complimented him with gifts and salutations heretofore? Be a gift and a benediction. Shine with real light and not the borrowed reflections of gifts. Common men are apologies for men; they bow the head, they excuse themselves with prolix reasons, they accumulate appearances because the substance is not.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

CHAPTER V.

WHAT should we think of a friend who, on coming to call, should greet us with a profusion of needless apologies?

“Pardon my delay in returning your most delightful call, but inexorable duties, company, shopping, and a round of pleasures, have prevented me from seeing you. Imagine my heart filled with grief, my cheeks blistered with penitential tears for this procrastination.”

Our emotions would be those of surprise and embarrassment if these apologies were to continue for any length of time, and we should feel still more uncomfortable if our friend on rising to take her departure were to say, without blushing:

“I know that my hair is disheveled, my dress in disorder and my shoes

untied, but I rushed off in such haste I had no time to attend to these little matters. I hope you will pardon my carelessness, for I really do intend to mend my ways at some future time."

Would we not open our eyes with amazement, and believe, with reason, our visitor to be lacking not only in regard for her friends, but in respect for herself.

Writes one correspondent:

"My ink is pale and futile, so to speak, to express my customary emotion of shame."

We become so used to this "customary emotion of shame" that we hardly know how to begin a letter without it, and so we apologize for poor paper, and pale ink, and bad pens, and careless writing, for long neglect, for everything in fact except our bad manners, which really need the apology.

Nothing is more becoming in a letter than repose and dignity, but how is it possible to enter the presence of a

friend with any kind of repose when one must limp in, supported by a very poor excuse. If we have anything of interest or importance to say, after a courteous greeting, let us start directly with the subject matter, and trust to the warmth and earnestness of our thought to carry us through. Love, wit, eloquence, need no apologies to come and go with.

“My child,” writes Madame de Sévigné, “this letter becomes infinite; it is a torrent that I cannot keep back.”

Mrs. Delany writes—“I could not live longer without speaking to you, my dearest sister.”

How hard it is to write yesterday's letter to-day. Often we will spend as much time inventing a circuitous excuse for one letter long neglected as would have enabled us to write half a dozen letters promptly. A fine, high spirit disdains excuses, and will rather own the fault directly. The poet, Longfellow, writes with genial frankness to a lady friend:

"It is so long since I wrote you last that I am heartily ashamed to think of it. Let us make believe that I am a good and punctual correspondent, and then I shall have courage to proceed."

He could have given a score of reasonable excuses, but offers none, preferring to confide in the generous heart of his friend to make all needed excuses for him.

Thackeray pushes aside all the cold, formal excuses that present themselves, while his large, generous nature warms with grateful thoughts towards the friend who is dear.

"I've been thinking of writing you a beautiful letter ever so long, but, etc., etc. And instead of doing my duty this morning, I began this drawing and will pay your debt some other day, no, part of your debt. I intend to owe you the rest, and like to owe it, and think I am sincerely grateful to you always, my dear friend."

What simplicity it is to apologize

for the scarcity of news in town, or the dullness of the country, when every one knows it is heart and mind that are dull, and not town or country. Dante in a noble letter written in exile says patiently, "Can I not from any corner of the earth behold the sun and stars? Can I not under any region of the sky speculate on the sweetest truth?"

Our excuses are apt to be so pathetically illogical, like that of the boy writing home from school:

"Dear Sister:—I don't know what to say, because it—rains."

Nearly all of them might be summed up in these words of a penitent girl:

"I meant to have written long ago; but it is so hard to be good."

We are very apt to apologize for our hurried writing—to spend a whole page in saying that we write in tearing haste. At other times we will apologize for a short letter, lest it show some lack of respect or affection. It would be just as sensible to apolo-

gize for a short speech, which we know may contain as much or more feeling than a long one. Margaret Winthrop writes:

"I am wel perswaded of thy love, and can see it in a few lines as in a whole volem."

Cicero, with polished wit, apologizes for writing a long letter because he had not time to write a short one.

Emerson, who would not stoop to an apology, says brusquely in writing to Agassiz: "But I have made my letter ridiculously long, and pray you remember that you have brought it on your own head."

Eugénie de Guérin makes the most pathetic apology to her brother, who has neglected her:

"You will forgive my bad writing, as I forgive your not writing at all, which is much worse, to my thinking."

Very few polished letter-writers begin or close their letters with apologies. The poet Gray writes to his friend:

"I would make you an excuse (as indeed I ought) . . . but I know they are never true. Nothing so silly as indolence, when it hopes to disguise itself; every one knows it by its saunter, as they do his Majesty at a masquerade, by the firmness of his tread, and the elevation of his chin."

Charles Lamb made use of all manner of whimsical excuses.

"Dear Lad," he writes, "you must think me a brute beast, a rhinoceros. Indeed, I am none of those shocking things, but have arrived at that indisposition to letter-writing which would make it a hard exertion to write three lines to a king to spare a friend's life."

Robert Burns was another writer whose letters, while they give us so many examples of graceful penitence, reveal a fatal weakness of character.

He writes:

"Forgive me, my once dear, my ever dear friend, my seeming negligence."

"I do not recollect that I ever felt a

severer pang of shame than on looking at the date of your last letter."

"Why I did not write to you long ago is what even on the rack I could not answer."

"If you can in your mind form any idea of indolence, dissipation, hurry, cares, change of country, entering on untried scenes of life, all combined, you will save me the trouble of a blushing apology."

His contrition is so real, he is so honest in naming the worst excuses first, that we must forgive his negligence . . . but notice when he writes to his brother—his heart speaks—there is no need of apologies.

"I have stolen from my corn-sowing this minute to write a line."

Mendelssohn enters the presence of his friend with honest, openhearted confusion:

Dear Mrs. Moscheles:

Should this sheet of paper turn red by the time Klingerman arrives, it would

but show the reflection of my face covered with blushes, for I feel so ashamed.

True eloquence and sincere warmth of feeling need no apologies to come and go with, and polished writers avoid them because they are commonplace. This is not saying that we must never use them, for certainly we all know of times when an apology is an expression of true courtesy, and when not to make one, proves an obstinacy of disposition quite as unbecoming as affectation.

In nothing are we more characteristic, and the following apology with which Hannah More opens a letter to her friend Mrs. Boscawen is the very picture of the sound of her voice:

BATH, 1797.

If I do write, quoth I to myself, in the humor I am in, I shall convince my most honored friend that I have no wit; and if I do not write I shall prove

to a demonstration that I have no gratitude. Thus the matter stood for a long time in exact equipoise; but at last recollecting that wit was only a talent, and gratitude a virtue, I was resolved to secure to myself the reputation and comfort of the one, though at the risk, nay the certainty, of forfeiting all pretensions to the other. Now, Madam, I appeal to your discernment, if I have not made the better choice? Of attaining to the one I despair; it is a rare but dangerous present . . . but come Gratitude, thou peaceful, amiable virtue, and confess (though thou art less addicted to confession than feeling) if I did not cherish thee in my heart this morning, when I received so delightful a letter from Audley Street."

The Dry Letter.

“But here is something new, a reproach; do not be frightened, 'tis rather a complaint. I wanted to tell thee that thy letter to Mimi would have given her more pleasure if it had been somewhat longer, and did not need the addition of a thousand things that are always wanting in thy letters. Is it thy fault, or that of thy man's heart? Ours, methinks, is more skilled in matters of affection, and does not wait to be asked for kind words and all one likes to see in a friendly correspondence. . . ”

CHAPTER VI.

OF her dull companion, Mademoiselle du Plessis, Madame de Sévigné used wickedly to observe:

“Heaven gives me grace to hear not a word that she says.”

If the dry platitudes and elegant commonplaces of Mademoiselle had come in dainty squares of satin paper, scented, sealed, and tied with ribbons, such heavenly complaisance could hardly have been exercised. A letter is a compliment from a friend, it comes a long distance; it appeals to our finest sense of courtesy. For this very reason that a letter is a gift, we expect it to be filled with kindest feeling, sympathy, affection, and all the joyous elixirs of life. When the cup is proffered to us empty, or filled with an infinite deal of nothing, we are con-

scious of a feeling of disappointment and wrong.

Worthless letters are fit only to be cast into the flames, and if that were an end of the matter, their coming would not be such an offense; but we all know how they cling to the skirts and follow the heels of memory like so many burrs until an answer has been given. Instead of a delight and a refreshment, a number of dry correspondents can make of letter-writing a vexation of spirit. It is not only difficult, but fatiguing, to reply to letters that have no fervor or brightness in themselves to warm us to the task. And these letters always tumble upon one so unexpectedly—always demanding an answer at the most inconvenient season—snatching from us some little ripple of enjoyment, some longed-for moment of repose and rest. But we are helpless—there is no escape from tiresome letters.

“Oh, these letters! these letters!” complains Washington Irving. “They

tear my life from me in strips and ribbons."

Since a letter is dear to us for the motive which prompted it, not for any other intrinsic value, it would be the refinement of selfishness to answer only such letters as are profitable and amusing. Some friends have not a letter-writing capacity, and they send us dry formalities because they are unable to "unbosom themselves at the point of the pen," to confide their emotions to a blank sheet of paper. Such letters should be met with all delicacy, and answered with unfaltering patience; but when a friend sends a letter that is essentially dry, simply because he is too indolent or thoughtless to write a better one, we are not indebted to him for any compliment. We are not in duty bound to thank him heartily, or even to ask him to write again.

The dry letter which is brief, which leaves out everything one would delight to hear, has its compensations. It

takes but a moment of our time and asks almost nothing in return; but the long, dry letter, which is rambling, diffuse, tiresome because the writer lacks self-control and concentration of thought, for such a letter there is no compensation in life.

The letter written with effort will nearly always be dry. When the writer stops every few moments to bite his pen, to gaze around the room, to wonder what can be said next, his thoughts on paper will surely be cold, stiff and disconnected. To awaken interest in others, one must feel a warm heart-motive in what one is saying.

"I write so fast," says Fanny Kemble, "I fear you can hardly read; but you will see I am conversing with you, and that will show you that I turn to you for the comfort of your tenderness."

"I am delighted to have an excuse to write to you, my dearest friend," says Mary Mitfort; "I was longing to write, to tell you of our perfect sympathy."

.

"I can't stay for a letter which I hope to-morrow's mail will bring," writes Mrs. Delany. "My heart is too full of my dearest Mary not to overflow." Such letters can never be dry.

It requires no mean skill to be able to pour into a letter the riches of one's life, the cream of a book or sermon, the flavor of a sonata, the sentiment of a June day, or the romance of a moonlight night. To be entertaining, one must add a pinch of gossip, a spicery of wit, and sprinkling of pleasantries, giving the whole consistency with common sense. Madame de Sévigné knew well how to mingle gossip, wit, romance, serious reflections and warm-hearted tenderness in the most charming letters. To read her letters is to be drawn close into her life, to mingle with the gayety and splendor of court scenes, or to walk with tranquil melancholy the green alleys of her beloved Rochers, watching her young trees grow into beauty; to share her tears

(for she was a lady experienced in tears), her memories, the dullness of a black and rainy evening, or to enjoy the brightest pleasure when Madame, attended by her son, rides out in her carriage and six, and the horses seem to fly as the company sing songs along the road. Tender, witty, laughable fancies, longings for a more serious life, by the very impulse of love, are poured forth intuitively, irresistibly into her letters. Béranger once said, "Mes chansons, c'est moi." Madame de Sévigné might have said: "My letters, they are myself."

Some sensitive, shrinking heart will say: "My life is so dull, homely, monotonous. I have no rich material of which to make an interesting letter." From just such lives, from just such lonely hearts, have been pressed the best and sweetest letters. Leisure and solitude foster tenderness and fidelity. In retirement one feels the preciousness of friendship. A life could hardly have been more retiring

than Cowper's, and yet his letters are among the finest in literature.

Eugénie de Guérin, living so obscurely in the ruinous old chateau of Le Cayla, and Maurice her brother, leading the life of a monk in the cloister-like house of Lammenais, had no great things of which to write. A swarm of glowing sparks in the chimney on a winter evening,—the sweet-smelling air of the fields,—the bell of Andillac ringing the Angelus,—a May day, when kneeling in prayer, she feels her soul “rise with the perfume of the flowers before God,” these were delights in the simple life of Eugénie. To Maurice, light fantasies of clouds, the primroses looking up like a row of school-girls from under their hoods of snow, or it might be the distant voice of the sea, answering the wild, passionate longings of his soul, these were events rich in thought and feeling.

These letters of Eugénie and Maurice de Guérin, so pure and spiritual in their beauty, so tender and unaffected

in their love, were crowned by the Academy of France, and in distant lands have been read like romances.

Dr. Samuel Parr, the eminent scholar, gave so much time to his fourteen hundred correspondents, that he accomplished no other special work in life. As he spent so much time in writing letters, his correspondence should have made him distinguished, but it has been observed that the most learned men are capable of writing the driest letters. We do not care in the least for the Doctor's erudition, while we are deeply interested when Eugénie de Guérin tells us of so simple a thing as washing her gown in the brook. The girl's letters are saturated with warm human life.

James Howell complains of French letters—cobweb compositions with no strength of matter, nothing for the reader to carry away with him that may enlarge the motions of his soul. He says that one can hardly find anything of solid knowledge in a hundred

of them. To draw any observation out of them is like trying to distil cream out of froth. "They are like an echo—mere sound and nothing else." A letter is indeed like an echo—an echo of our friend's voice—telling us of all the characteristic details of everyday life, with smiles, tears, love, tenderness. Being noble, our friend needs to put some nobleness of thought into his letters—but it is the being loved and remembered we care for, and not for any solid knowledge.

A letter is not for instruction, but for comfort and joy. "The understanding's copper coin counts not with the gold of love." When the old Greek wrote to his friend, "The most learned Palladius brought me your letter all gold," he did not value it for any dry facts it contained, but because it told him of his friend's faithfulness and affection. Letters do not belong to the literature of knowledge, but to the literature of power. The letter of love and friendship has that vibratory

quality which fills the soul with fresh, new life—inspires it with courage, strength, patience, joy—so we say there is power in a friendly letter to move the soul.

A warm-hearted, motherly woman, speaking of her son's letters, which came every Monday morning, said:

"And when the letter comes, the work becomes so light and easy, and my heart is so glad—but when the letter does not come, then how the washing drags—how heavy the work seems all day."

We all know how heavy the heart may be when an expected letter has been delayed—but when it comes, bringing a word of love, hope, encouragement—how the heart bounds with joy, and all things seem possible. When the friendly word is missing, when the little bright drop of the soul is gone, then comes Eugénie de Guérin's wistful question over and over again:

"Is it thy fault, or that of thy man's heart?"

The Sympathetic Letter.

“ Real letter-writing is founded on a need as old and as young as humanity itself, the need that one human being has of another.”

The highest action of man's nature is the free play of sympathy, not agreement of thought, nor concurrence of will, but feeling with another.

T. T. MUNGER.

I have reseved from you this week a letter, though short, yet very sweete, wherebye I perseyve that whether you be present with me, or absent from me, you are ever one towards me, and your heart remayneth allwayes with me.

ANNE WINTHROPPE.

CHAPTER VII.

THE letter of sympathy begins with the little seed thought, cherished tenderly in the heart, fed secretly with the rain of sorrow, or the sunshine of happiness, until one day the impulse of love comes and it bursts into the perfect flower of speech. From the book we were reading the other day, fell such a letter, dim and yellow with age, but a hundred years could not dim the fervent feeling that thrilled every line and page, from the fresh, eager greeting to the last word of love pressed into the border.

It is to one of these letters that Cowper refers, when writing to Lady Hesketh:

“Thou dear, comfortable cousin, whose letters amongst all that I receive, have this property peculiarly their own, that I expect them without

trembling, and never find anything in them that does not give me pleasure for which, therefore, I would take nothing in exchange that the world can give me, save and except—your own company.”

It requires the tenderest sympathy to press with a gentle, sensitive touch upon the emotions of another's heart, the finest delicacy of feeling to say just the right words and not say too much. The pain a sympathetic letter may give when too much has been said, is illustrated by the following passionate complaint from one of Maurice de Guerin's letters:

“The letter which reached me last evening has completely paralyzed me. It is somewhat severe, but full of good counsels. Unfortunately, I am so constituted that the best remedies fail to affect me, and what is far more strange they seem to aggravate my condition. And thus this letter in touching my most sensitive wounds for the purpose of healing them, has set astir within

me a vibration of all my heart's suffering."

Nothing helps so much in writing a sympathetic letter as experience. To enter fully into the emotions of a friend's heart, we ourselves must have felt the same thrill of joy, the same heart-break of sorrow. It happened that a Texas cow-boy was once asked what helped him most in writing a sympathetic letter and he replied, "The greatest help to me in writing a sympathetic letter is experience. If I am down-hearted and want sympathy, then I can write sympathy better than when I am happy and enjoying myself and do not feel no clouds hovering around me."

This lad knew little about books, but he had experienced loneliness and suffering enough to teach him the meaning of the word sympathy.

The motive that directly impels all friendly letter-writing is the very human longing to share our experiences with those we love; to tell them of all

that is happening to us, all that we are feeling, loving, enjoying, suffering—and if the friend we write to is sympathetic, how the heart is drawn out of us. “We think,” says Bulwer, “of the lovely, listening face, the quick tear of sympathy, the heart so ready to pardon every fault, and warmest confidences flow rapidly from the pen.” Friends who are dear to us are not apart from any happiness we have in life, and we would have them share it all with us, at least by knowing of it, so that they may feel with us every innocent delight, whether it is a rosy morning, a handful of flowers, or a love secret.

We do not all possess the same powers of speech. One friend is affluent in confiding words, and easily commands the eloquence of accent, gesture, look; another finds that the same emotion holds him silent. In letter-writing this silent friend finds it a blessed privilege to enter directly the presence chamber of his friend's

heart, where his faithfulness, tenderness and love are not veiled by any confusion of restraint and embarrassment. Says the old poet:

“I chose to write the thing I durst not speak,
To her I loved.”

In a letter, a man lays bare his soul in a way that would not be thought of under other circumstances, spirit touches spirit, feeling is fanned into a glow, and so it often happens in writing letters that a friendship mounts quite unexpectedly into the pure flame of love. Nothing can be more sympathetic than a love-letter.

To be truly sympathetic, to respond to every throb and vibration of a friend's heart, one must have imagination, delicacy of feeling, experience, and most of all, unselfishness. In Fénelon's "Spiritual Letters to Men and Women" we have some fine examples of sympathetic letters. With what gentleness of feeling does he touch upon the illness and loneliness of a friend:

“Love is love everywhere, and bodily weakness does not lessen the heart’s warmth.”

Then leading her to the Divine Comforter:

“Love is never so powerful as when resting on the Bosom of the Beloved.”

The following letter of Edwin Booth, written after the death of Mrs. Booth, is considered one of the noblest expressions of spiritual faith in literature, and ranks with the letters of Madame Guyon and Bishop Fénelon:

“One after another the blows have fallen so heavily that souls unaided by God’s unfaltering love, and faith stronger than death, would have sunk in despair beneath their crushing weight. But in your hearts as in hers—dear, dear mother, for so she always seemed to me, Mary’s mother—as in my own, there is a light which sorrow cannot quench; which guides us through the darkness of the grave; which reveals to us the secret of His

mysterious works—the secret love. O that I could give you the full companionship of that love as I have felt it since Mary's death, the peace that has filled my soul, and the strength that has flowed steadily into it since that terrible day! Could I give you this, you would rejoice for her as I do, although my heart aches for you while I write. . . . Oh, I feel such an intense love for God when sorrow touches me that I could almost wish my heart would always ache—I feel so near to Him, I realize His love so thoroughly, so intensely, at such times."

"Words cannot reach such sorrow," Longfellow writes to a friend; "I can only press your hand in silence." The sympathy born from love and suffering is as swift as the wind and illuminating as the fire. It does not need many words. "Your own heart," says Elizabeth Seabury, "will better suggest to you what I feel than any words I can make use of."

**Selections from the Letters of
John Greenleaf Whittier.**

The Quaker poet's letters bear the loveliest impress of his fine sympathetic feeling and pure spiritual nature. He makes his friends feel that when absent from them, he is still present with them, entering into their lives, suffering with their sorrow and rejoicing in their joy. Such generous sympathy is the natural impulse of this unselfish, kindly-hearted man. How lightly he dwells upon his own ills, and says directly: "But the world is still fair to me; my friends are very dear; I love and am loved."

TO LUCY HOOPER'S SISTERS:

8th mo, 6, 1841.

What condolence can I offer to those who have been able so fully to understand and appreciate the purity and beauty of the spirit which has just passed from among you? He alone,

who loveth those whom He chasteneth can comfort and sustain you under such a trial as yours. To Him, who hath taken to the arms of His love our dear Lucy, I can alone commend you.

.
 What shadows we are! It seems but yesterday when I used to visit you in the long winter evenings at Brooklyn; since Lucy and myself stood by her own loved Merrimac together in the rich light of a western August sun. And can it be that she is no longer with us? But she is not gone. Her pure affections, her fine intellect, her faith and love, and simple trust in her Heavenly Father, are not lost. She lives still,—a glorified dweller in the same universe with ourselves. With the deepest sympathy with your afflicted mother, and with yourselves and brother, and with a warm desire that the dispensations of Providence may be blessed to us all, I am very sincerely. . .

TO LYDIA MARIA CHILD.

15th 11th mo., 1869.

Thy beautiful book and kind letter reached me a few days ago, and my heart has been thanking thee ever since. It was an exceedingly happy thought of thine to send out these words of cheer to those of us who are beginning to pass down life's sunset declivities. I do not like, however, to have thee call thyself old! I never think of thee as such. When the heart and fancy are still young, why should we recur to family registers? . . . I am thinking how much my sister would have liked thy book. How strange and terrible are these separations—the deepest agony of mystery—this reaching out for the love which we feel must be ever living, but which gives us no sign! Ah, my friend! what is there for us but to hold faster and firmer our faith in the goodness of God? The all which he allots to us or our friends is for the best—best for them, for us, for

all. Let theology, and hate, and bigotry talk as they will, I for one will hold fast to this, God *is* good; He *is* our Father! He knows what love is, what our hearts, sore and bereaved, long for, and he will not leave us comfortless, for is He not Love? . . .

WHITTIER TO CELIA THAXTER.

8th mo., 8, 1867.

It is to sheer kindness of heart, my dear friend, that I owe thy pleasant letters so vividly representing life at the Shoals. They are wonderfully hospitable letters—they give me the freedom of the islands. I sit by the parlor fire in the stormy nights; I see the tossing boats in the little harbor! the islands fringed round with foam! I feel the spray as it tosses up through cleft and gorge; and I hear thee telling stories to young folks, and half fancy myself a boy among them, nestling close to thee with “not unpleasant horror” as the tragedy deepens.

TO OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

8th mo., 18, 1891,

Ever since I heard the sad news of Lowell's death, I have been thinking of thee, and longing to see thee, for we are now standing alone. The bright, beautiful ones who began life with us have all passed into the great shadow of silence, or rather, let us hope, in the language of Henry Vaughan, "They have gone into the world of light, and we alone are lingering here!" Well, I at least shall soon follow them, and I wait the call with a calm trust in the Eternal Goodness.

I have been ill all summer, but the world is still fair to me; my friends are very dear to me; I love and am loved. And it is a great joy to me that I can think of thee as well, and in the full enjoyment of all thy gifts and powers, surrounded still with friends who love and honor thee.

Picture Letters.

I think that I have earned that you should write me one of those perfect letters in which you make me see everything you like about yourself and others.

GEORGE ELIOT.

Thy letter has just been handed to me. It was most comfortable to me because it gave me such a picture of thy life with the children.

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE.

Last night we had wind and rain as in France. I pictured to myself how the storm was beating against your little window. I was again in your little chamber; I saw your harp, piano, your birds; you played me my favorite air—and I at Rome, far from you, in a great palace, four hundred leagues and the Alps between us.

M. DE CHATEAUBRIAND.

CHAPTER VIII.

LIKE painted china, the picture letter has a charm of its own. The beverage contained would be as fragrant and finely flavored in a plainer cup, but we like the allurements of an exquisite little genre picture, or some familiar landscape laid in with soft and skyish tints.

To paint a picture in another's mind requires a delicate perception, a vivid imagination, and fine sympathetic feeling. The power of writing in pictures usually springs from some warm emotion of the heart, and is very different from descriptive writing, which may be simply putting in order a number of dry details. The descriptive writer, with infinite pains, puts together these mechanical observations:

“The daisy has disk flowers changed into rays. The center is yellow, the

rays white or more or less purplish or crimson-tipped underneath."

This is valuable as information, but meaningless as a picture. Contrast it with an exquisite penciling in one of Wordsworth's lines:

"The daisy's starlike shadow trembling on a rock."

Burns discovers the timid blossom with one swift glance of sympathy:

"Wee, modest, crimson-tipped flower."

How few the words and yet how vivid the painting, because a tender emotion has stirred the poet's heart.

In conversation, in our warmth of feeling, in our eagerness to make a friend see what we have seen, we are more apt to talk in pictures—to be even dramatic in our style. In the colder mood of letter-writing, we unconsciously lapse into dry and tedious description. In conversation, we know the moment we are losing the interest of our listener, and we at once leave off petty details, and hasten the

motion of the story. The worst of letter-writing is that one may be tiresome for a long while without ever knowing it.

The descriptive letter makes use of many words. It tells everything, because its writer sees nothing, feels nothing. It is of all letters the most wearisome and commonplace. How different the letter that, as with a breath of enchantment, calls up a glowing picture in a few, simple words. Your friend, in her letter from home to-night, says she is sitting in the library. There comes to your mind a vision of the brown, old-fashioned room. With another stroke of the pen she draws the scarlet curtains, stirs the fire into a cheery blaze, and by the charm of a tender line or two, you find yourself in your friend's presence, sitting by her side enjoying a cosy talk.

Even a letter written in a poor, shabby room may have its own word-pictures. A young girl writing from such a comfortless chamber, says:

"I am sitting in a room in the attic, on a low stool, in search after a little daylight, which is best nearest the floor."

How simple the words, and yet how clear the picture of the dusky room, the girl's flower-like face, and the sunshine lying on the floor.

When Cowper in one of his letters to Lady Hesketh writes: "The grass under my window is all bespangled with dew-drops, and the birds are singing in the apple-trees among the blossoms," the sentence seems by magic to open a window and let in the morning light and air.

Miss Mitford, writing on a rainy day, gives a pen-and-ink sketch of the branches of leafless trees, "tapping like long black fingers against her window pane."

One may turn and even view the correspondent. "Methinks," says Sterne, "I see my contemplative girl in the garden, watching the gradual approach of spring."

Thompson writes to his friend:

"Now I figure you wandering, philosophical and pensive, amidst the brown withered groves."

"I often see you," says George Eliot, "enjoying your sunsets and the wayside flowers."

Schiller writes:

"I fly to you, dearest friends—Leipzig rises before my dreams and expectations like the rosy dawn behind the wooded hills."

Schumann draws us into his own mood in this picture—we cannot help feeling with him:

"Dost thou remember how we drove away from Padua along the Brenta one evening? The glowing Italian night oppressed us, and one after another the travelers closed their eyes. Towards morning a voice cried "Ecco, Ecco, Signori Venezia." The sea, still, immense, outspread before us only on the far horizon, fine sparkles played up and down, as though the small waves softly spoke together in

dreams—so does it interweave and sparkle and throb in Mendelssohn's "Meeresschilder;" we dream sleepily, listening to it; we become a thought, rather than that we then think."

Washington Irving's letters are filled with pictures of people and places, and the clear, transparent atmosphere, the steady, serene, golden sunshine of a bright day, seems, as he writes, to have entered his very soul. A bit of a picture-letter written at Sunnyside touches one like music.

"I lay awake this morning with the little birds singing before my windows, and all my thoughts and plans were pleasant."

How deliciously he paints this little nymph, Mary Jackson, in her pretty straw hat with the pink ribbons tied under her chin:

"I was out visiting with Ann yesterday, and met that little assemblage of smiles and fascinations, Mary Jackson. She was bounding with youth, health and innocence and good-humor.

She had a pretty straw hat, tied under her chin with a pink ribbon, and looked like some little woodland nymph, just turned out by spring and fine weather. God bless her light heart, and grant it may never know care or sorrow."

George Eliot entreats her friend:

"Write me one of your charming letters, making a little picture of everybody and everything about you"—and she illumines her own letters with the coloring of "red sunsets" and skies "exquisitely blue."

To her, the wide sky and the hills and the wild flowers are linked with all calming thoughts, and she pours the joy of life into the picture of a crystally clear river, rushing along in the morning sunlight between a fringe of aspens and willows—and something of the sadness of life is felt in the sight of gliding ships, darkening against the dying sunlight.

Unconsciously, these pictures are colored with the writer's own mood, and it is their suggestiveness which

gives them artistic value. The picture of a rainy day delicately wrought out in half-tints; the sketch of a summer's morning when green fields are freshly powdered with daisies; the study of an autumn evening when brown wooded hills are shown against a sunset sky—these may suggest all the romance of life, or the deepest feeling of the heart.

**Selections from the Letters of
George Eliot.**

In her letters as in a "mirror of loving words," one sees how George Eliot revels in the "sweet peace of the country," how she loves "the larks and fresh leaves" and "buttercups" and "hedgerow grasses," the "rich woods" and "glorious skies." She had a passion for the sunshine which she calls "the wealth of life,—after love and trust." It is touching to notice the sweet humility of this great nature, and her constant and childlike longing for the love and sympathy of her friends.

"One always feels the want of voice and eyes to accompany a letter and give it the right tone."

"Mme. Bodichon writes that in Sussex the air is cold and clear, and the woods and lanes dressed in wintry

loveliness of fresh, grassy patches, mingled with soft grays and browns of the trees and hedges. Mr. Harrison shed the agreeable light of his kind eyes on me yesterday for a brief space; but I hope I was more endurable to my visitors than to myself, as a bundle of unpleasant sensations with a palpitating heart and awkward manners. Impossible to imagine the large charity I have for people who detest me. But don't you be one of them."

One evening, after a shower, as the sun was setting over the sea behind us, some peculiar arrangement of clouds threw a delicious evening light on the irregular cluster of houses, and merged the ugliness of their forms in an exquisite flood of color, as a stupid person is made glorious by a noble deed.

It was just that moment in spring when the leaves were in full leaf, but still keep their delicate varieties of col-

oring, and that *transparency* which belongs only to this season.

The long grass was waving in all the glory of June, before the mower has come to make it suffer a "love change" from beauties into sweet odors.

We are, as usual, getting more than our share of peace and other good, except in the matter of warmth and sunshine. Our common is a sort of ball-room for the winds, and on the warmest days we have had here, we have found them at their music and dancing. They roar around the corners of our house in wintry fashion, while the sun is shining on the brown grass.

I have no memory of an autumn so disappointing as this. It is my favorite season. I delight especially in the golden and red tints under purple clouds. But this year the trees were almost stripped of their leaves before they had changed color—dashed off by

the winds and rain. We have had no autumnal beauty.

The smallest details written in the hastiest way, that will enable me to imagine you as you are, are just what I want; indeed, all I care about in correspondence.

It is always good to know, if only in passing, a charming human being; it refreshes one like flowers and woods and sunshine.

The best joy your words give me is the sense of that sweet, generous feeling in which you dictated them, and I shall always be the richer because you have in this way made me know you better.

A neighbor of ours was reciting to me yesterday some delicious bits of dialogue with a quaint Surrey woman; e.g., "O ma'am, what have I gone through with my husband? He is so

uneddicated, he never had a tail-coat in his life."

It is never too late to write generous words.

"Your words of affection in the note you sent me are very dear to my remembrance. I like not only to be loved, but also to be told that I am loved. I am not sure that you are of the same mind."

"Farewell, dear. Don't write unless you have a real desire to gossip with me a little about yourself, and our mutual friends. You know I always like to have news of you, but I shall not think you unkind, I shall only think you have other things to do, if you are silent."

— —

— — — — —

— — — — —

The Lugubrious Letter.

And troth, it's a letther myself
would like better, could I manage to
lave the contints of it out.

THOMAS MOORE.

Why was I ever born that upon my
innocent head should fall this shower
of feminine disquiet?

OLD LETTER.

I write to-day, dearest, . . . merely
to keep your mind easy, by telling you
I have a headache; if I said nothing at
all you might fancy I had something
worse.

JANE WELSH CARLYLE.

Why do I trouble you with these
perplexities? If I mayn't tell you
what I feel, what is the use of a
friend?

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY.

CHAPTER IX.

LADY DOLEFUL need not seal her fat envelopes with black wax, or stamp them with a screech owl. We know very well she would not pay us the compliment of writing, unless she had some unpleasant news to relate. All of the malaria and rheumatism, the ennui and care, the quarrels and heart-breaks in the neighborhood, are crowded into one of her letters, until we have misery enough to make a funeral. "Who has not felt their whole blood run backward," says Fannie Kemble, "at sight of one of those folded fate-bearers." The morning may have been one of the fairest, life may have appeared to us all *colour-de-rose*, but from this miserable letter arise clouds enough to darken the whole landscape.

In the Arabian story, the fisherman brought up in his net a bottle sealed

with copper. It was an ink bottle, of course, for he heard a shrill voice inside of it, crying:

“Let me out! Let me out!”

He unsealed the bottle, and a blue smoke curled out, which rose higher and higher, and grew darker and darker, until the whole heavens were shadowed by the form of Afreets, the terrible Blue Giant.

If we are discouraged, or home-sick, or disappointed, why should we loosen all of our gloom and weariness and despondency in a letter? The heavy grief of to-day may prove but a shadow to-morrow. Is it well, then, to make it a matter of history, by putting it down with pen and ink?

It is far nobler to battle against this evil genius. Oftentimes he may be overcome by mere trifles;—a brisk walk in the open air, a fresh and becoming gown, or a companionable book. “I once gave a lady two-and-twenty receipts for melancholy,” says Sidney Smith. “One was a bright fire; an-

other to remember all the pleasant things said to and of her; another to keep a box of sugar plums on the chimney-piece and a kettle simmering on the hob. I thought this was trifling at the moment, but have in after life discovered how true it is, that these little pleasures often banish melancholy better than higher and more exalted objects; and that no means ought to be thought trifling which can oppose it either in ourselves or in others."

In olden times some pleasing gift usually accompanied a letter. A pair of shoes or geese, a string of peppers, a piece of plate, or "a book of the news of the week" often added great zest to the correspondence. How kind and mirthful those letters were; for it is hardly probable a wailful letter ever went with a pair of fat capons, or a lugubrious epistle appeared in company with a festive cake.

As a letter is the expression of real, throbbing human life, we should not

wish the friend who is sad to remain silent, or even to attempt to wear a smiling mask over a tearful face.

"I am sorry to see my dear lady writes tristely," says Thackeray, "but I would rather you would write sorrowfully if you feel so than sham gaiety or light-heartedness."

We all know how a sweet heart when pressed by grief and loneliness finds expression in fresh sweetness and tenderness, while the rough, irascible nature is as suddenly clothed with thorns. There are times when it is a dear and precious privilege to share our sorrow with a friend—times, God help us to bear them, when our letters must cruelly wound the ones we love. But let us send joyful tidings when we can, and never for any trivial calamity pierce the heart of a friend.

One can hardly justify his intelligence when ready to cry with weariness and fatigue. But Melancholy is noted for being a great letter-writer. She regards her friend's heart as sim-

ply a convenient cushion into which she is constantly sticking pins and needles of fretful complaint. One has great respect for the boy at school who said he could not write home because his shoes pinched him. He was a much more comfortable correspondent than the rosy-cheeked girl who delighted to send a full and lamentable account of all her aches and pains to her afflicted parents.

We can hardly calculate the amount of harm done by recounting over and over our aches and pains and grievances. In this way, we deepen many times our brain impressions of pain and wrong, we make our friends and acquaintances shrink with dread from our conversation and letters; in brief, we do what we can to destroy our best happiness in life.

A sick girl in a mission school in Africa had the right idea of a letter when she wrote to her friend: "I am well, that is, in my heart, and I hope you are." This contains the two es-

sentials of all comforting letters, that is, good cheer and friendly feeling.

In nothing does real force and power of character stand out more strongly than in the will to see light rather than darkness. "As for me," says Cholmondeley, "my life still continues a fountain of never-ending delight, a romance renewed every morning and never smaller to-day than it was yesterday, but always enhancing itself with every breath I draw." Such a letter, the vibration of the personal feeling of the writer, is in itself an inspiration to joy and delight.

George Eliot so often speaks of the happiness in a friend's letter as being dear to her, as giving her a draught of real comfort and pleasure. It was George Eliot who said: "Some people are born to make life pretty, and others to grumble because it is not pretty enough."

We forget when we fill our letters with all manner of troubles and vexations, that such confidences, like the

plagues from Pandora's box, once sent abroad can never be shut in again. When Jane Carlyle, half vexed, half laughing, confided to her letters, complaints of headaches, faceaches, heartaches, and all manner of lamentations over the annoyances and vexatious cares of every-day life, she little dreamed that they would be trumpeted from one end of the world to the other, or that her name would become a synonym for fretful complaint.

"Ever since I came here" she exclaims in one letter, "I have been passing out of one silent rage into another."

If Jeannie had only controlled her rage in silence. But her spirit moved her to write at the "unlikeliest moments," when she was ill or out of temper.

"Oh, my dear!" she writes to Mrs. Russell, "I feel so fractious this evening; should like to break something, or box somebody's ears! Perhaps it is the east wind, perhaps my dinner of only

soup, perhaps original sin. Whatever it is, I must positively try to come out of it, and the best way I can think of to smooth my 'raven down' is writing some lines to you."

This good, sympathetic friend understood Jane Carlyle's humorous speech so well that she could make all allowances for her eloquence when "vaixed." When Mr. Carlyle's letter has been delayed two hours, Jeannie in a tumult of wretchedness of heart feels as if she had passed through an attack of typhus fever. When she feels as if death had been dissolved in a liquid, and she had drunk of it until she was full,—we find that the house had only been freshly painted. Heartfelt grief rarely makes use of many words. Sleeplessness, indigestion, incipient despair may inspire Mrs. Carlyle to write volumes of letters, but when real sorrow comes into her life, she is helpless in trying to speak. She would throw herself upon her friend's neck and cry like a child, but she can-

not put into cold, written words what lies in her heart.

But Mrs. Carlyle writes with such delightful warm-heartedness, even in tears her conversation is so brilliant and entertaining, what Carlyle termed such a "prismatic medium," that no one can resist her passionate appeal.

"O, be pleased all of you to think of me and love me."

The following letter, which changes so curiously with the weather, was written to Mr. Carlyle by one of his youthful friends, who styles himself Peter Pindar. It reflects quaintly enough the image of Thomas Carlyle's own lubugrious temper.

TO THOMAS CARLYLE.

CASTLEBANK, January 1, 1814.

Wind and weather hazy.

What is the life of man? Is it not to shift from trouble to trouble and from side to side? to button up one cause of vexation and unbutton another? So wrote the celebrated Sterne, so quoted

the no less celebrated Jonathan, and so may the poor devil Pindar apply it to himself. You mention some two or three disappointments you have met with lately. For shame, sir, to be so peevish and splenetic! Your disappointments are "trifles light as air" when compared with the vexations and disappointments I have experienced. I was vexed and grieved to the very soul, and beyond the soul, to go to Galloway and be deprived of—something you know nothing about. I was—but why do I talk to you about such things? There are joys and sorrows, pleasures and pains, with which a stoic, Platonic, humdrum bookworm sort of a fellow like you, sir, intermeddleth not, and consequently can have no idea of. I was disappointed in Bonaparte's escaping to Paris when he ought to have been taken prisoner by the allies at Leipsic. I was disappointed at your not mentioning anything about our old acquaintances at Edinburgh.

I was disappointed last Sunday, after I had got my stockings on, to find that there was a hole in the heel of one of them. I read a great many books at Kirkton, and was disappointed at finding faults in almost everyone of them. I will be disappointed; but what signifies going on at this rate? Unmixed happiness is not the lot of man.

Of chance and change, oh! let not man complain,
Else never, never will he cease to wail.
The weather is dull; I am melancholy. Good night.

P. S.—My dearest Dean: The weather is quite altered. The wind has veered about to the north. I am in good spirits and happy.

The Mischief-Making Letter.

How little she thought that eyes not
then opened to light would glance over
her shoulders and smile at her innocent
words. How much we all write that
had better not been written.

GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS.

His own dear letter, void of grace,
Now flew up in its parent's face.

THOMAS MOORE.

I burned the page that brought me love and woe,
At first it writhed to feel the spires of flame,
Then lay quite still; and o'er each word there
came
Its white ghost of the ash, and burning slow
Each said: "You cannot kill the spirit, know
That we will haunt you."

ANDREW HEDBROOK.

CHAPTER X.

“O MISCHIEF, thou art swift,” cries the poet, and perhaps this poet has tried to catch some mischief that has taken to itself wings in a letter. How often have these tricky messengers gone astray, leading bewildered postmen into pitiable perplexity, and causing untold confusion by delivering unexpected messages to the wrong people! How often do they slip, with malice aforethought, into the wrong envelopes, and chuckle inwardly at the consternation their appearance produces!

The story is told of the bewilderment of an editor upon receiving a letter beginning:

“You dear, neglected creature—” but his confusion was nothing to that of Miss Imogen, when she discovered that she had mailed a letter intended

for her sweetheart to her uncle, and enclosed her uncle's letter in an envelope addressed to her sweetheart. A more serious affair was that of the young woman who was most urgent to have her letters returned from the postoffice, as she had accepted the wrong offer of marriage.

Think of the six millions of letters drifting in one year into the dead letter office. If all the disappointments they have caused could be rolled into one, would it not make a big heart-ache? Besides, letters supposed to be dead, have such uncomfortable ways of coming back to life again.

When letters from a friend are packed away carefully in the attic to be found afterwards on the street corner, we begin to speculate on "the total depravity of inanimate things;" but when one of our own letters jumps up at an unlucky moment to trip us over, there is no breath left even for speculation. It is a fearful thing to be threatened or pursued by a letter of

our own writing. To argue with a phantom of one's self would be absurd, and we have actually no weapon of defence against so impalpable an enemy. Many a strong man has whitened before a letter in his own handwriting, and many an impulsive woman has sobbed in agony because her letters were beyond recall—for the most innocent letters falling into strange hands are liable to be cruelly misconstrued.

If Philander could have known that his love-letters to Florimel would, after a long rest under a heap of dust in the attic, be dragged out and read by a circle of fun-loving youngsters, and at last copied into somebody's note-book and published as rich material to point a moral and adorn a tale—if Philander could have known all of this, he would have asked Florimel to excuse him from writing letters.

A college professor, lecturing not long ago upon Richard Steele, whose

love-letters form so large a part of his contribution to literature, said:

“If you have any apprehension of becoming famous do not write love-letters, and if you do write love-letters, resolve never to become famous, for your letters will surely be published.”

Referring to his letters, Dr. Donne writes on one occasion: “I may speak to you a year hence in your chamber, before I know not whom, and not hear myself.”

One can almost see the dreamy, self-conscious poet as he follows his own letter in its long wanderings and listens to his own voice in the coming years. Doubtless his voice would be a pleasant one. Letter-voices usually are. It is too much trouble to write unkind words; besides, though your correspondent may be angry to the tips of his fingers, he is seldom angry so far as the tip of his pen.

When a sharp, prickly, hateful letter is produced, no one is particular to preserve it or to hand it around. A

cactus is not palatable. It is the love-letter, dripping with sweetness like a honeycomb, that the world delights to make merry over, at what terrible cost only the souls who furnish forth the feast can tell.

It requires great delicacy of feeling to decide when a man's letters ought to be published. If Hawthorne had dreamed that his love-letters were to be given to the world, he never would have written them, and yet we could spare some of Hawthorne's books better than these pure love-letters from our literature to-day.

This man has lived and loved. If in the truth and simplicity of his letters as in a rich garden spot, the world weary and sad and borne down with cares, may rest for a moment where "honied lines so freshly interlace," and taste the beauty and mystery and delicious sweetness of this pure heart's love—surely the love has grown none the poorer, and humanity has gained infinite riches.

On the other hand, your friend believing in your honor and good sense, has presented you in his letter with a key that opens, in generous confidence, treasures of feeling and tenderness in the innermost folding of his thought. Is it not wrong to handle this key carelessly, or to loan it to strangers whose scorn, ridicule, and contempt may make a thoroughfare of this too trusting heart? If Keats had known that one of his letters beginning "My dear Fanny," would be sold for so many pounds sterling in the market, the thought would have been flaming torture to his sensitive nature. Only a heart of flint, it seems, could have resisted his pathetic pleading, "If I have no other merit than my great love for you, that were sufficient to keep me sacred and unmentioned."

For dear friendship's sake, offer up this precious holocaust; commit your letters to the flames. Ashes tell no tales, although instances have been known of malicious letters soaring un-

singed up the chimney and coming down gaily on the other side to proclaim their secrets to the astonished neighborhood.

"I have destroyed almost all my friend's letters to me," writes George Eliot, "because they were only intended for my eyes, and could only fall into the hands of persons who know little of the writers, if I allowed them to remain till after my death. In proportion as I love every form of piety which is venerating love—I hate hard curiosity."

The noblest advice may be found in these words of Sidney Smith:

"I destroy on principle all letters to me, but I have no secrets myself. I should not care if almost every word I have written were published at Charing Cross. I live with open windows."

To-night, when from some glowing embers of mind and heart, your thoughts are gathered and outlined sharply in black and white in the letter you are writing to your friend, do

not think of it as a trifling matter. The letter may speed to its destination in safety, may give its salutations and messages and adieux with grace, may properly be burned and return to ashes, but the end is not yet. Your letter with its light-hearted gaiety or fretful complaining, with its passion, its sorrow, its love, has entered your friend's heart, there to work out good and evil in all the years to come—and a wicked letter is all the more wicked because it can never repent.

**Selections from the Letters of
Prince Bismarck.**

The leading characteristic of Bismarck's conversation is said to be unaffected simplicity. We find this same charm of simplicity in his letters, which, without ornament or conceit, give us the impression of his mind and heart.

"I hereby forego all excuses for long silence," he writes to his friend, "and in a similar case expect from yourself a like immunity."

Motley says of him:

"Bismarck is so entirely simple, that one is obliged to be saying to one's self all the time, 'This is the great Bismarck.'" Bismarck himself said, if he had learned nothing else, he had learned modesty.

In early years he became deeply attached to his fellow student, John Motley, and his letters to "Jack my

Dear," sound more like the letters of an impulsive school-girl than like those of the "man of blood and iron." The original of the following letter, written partly in German and partly in English, may be found in Motley's Correspondence:

BERLIN, 17 April, 1863.

My Dear Motley:

You have given me great pleasure in your letter of the 9th, and I would be very grateful to you if you would write oftener and longer.

I hate politics, but as you very truly say, like the grocer hating figs, I am obliged to keep my mind increasingly occupied with those figs. Even at this moment while I write to you, I have my ears full of particularly tasteless speeches out of the mouths of uncommonly childish and excited politicians, and I have, therefore, a moment of unwilling leisure, which I cannot use better than in giving you news of my welfare. I never thought that in

my riper years I should be obliged to carry on such an unworthy trade as parliamentary minister. As Envoy, although an official, I still had the feeling of being a gentleman; as minister one is a helot. I have come down in the world, and hardly know how. .

When reading over my letter, just before I go to meet in my bed "tired nature's sweet restorer," I find that under the noisy distractions of parliamentary bullying, I have written down a suite of dull commonplaces, and I was about to burn it, but considering the difficulty in this dreary sort of life of finding out an undisturbed moment, with a more sensible disposition of mind, I think, like Pontius Pilate, "What I have written I have written." These drops of my own ink will show you at least, that my thoughts, when left alone, readily turn to you. I never pass by an old Logier's house in the Friedrichs Strasse, without looking up at the windows that used to be ornamented by a

pair of red slippers sustained on the wall by the feet of a gentleman sitting in the Yankee way, with his head below and out of sight. I then gratify my memory with remembrances of "good old colony times when we were roguish chaps."

My wife is much obliged for your kind remembrance, and also the children. The little one wrenched his foot in tumbling down a staircase, and my daughter is in bed with a sore throat, but no harm in that. They are all well, after all, God be thanked. Now keep heartily well. I cannot write so unorthographic a language as English so late in the evening. But I beg of you to write soon again. Your handwriting looks like crow's feet, nevertheless it is readable; is mine also?

Your true old friend,

BISMARCK.

In a little volume of letters from Prince Bismarck to his wife and sister, we find the same charm of simplicity,

the same laughing glance of good humor, the same loyal affection and deep tenderness.

TO HIS SISTER, FRAU VON ARMIN.

Your true sisterly heart has so kindly offered itself for Christmas commissions that I make no excuse for giving you the occasion to expose yourself repeatedly to the seduction of Gerson and other enticing rascals, and ask you *sans phrase* for the following Christmas purchases for Johanna:

1. A bit of jewelry; she wishes for an opal heart like the one you have, and a person's desire is his paradise; I am prepared to pay about £30 for it. If one can get for that price two earrings, each consisting of one diamond set as free as possible, I should find it more tasteful. You have similar ones, but they will be very much dearer, and if you prefer the opal heart as an ornament for the neck, I will try and find a pair of earrings by-and-by to suit the pearl.

2. A dress for about £15, not more; she wishes for one "delicate white by candle light," *a deux passes, moirée antique*, or something of that sort; she requires about twenty yards.

3. If you can pick up a gilt fan, well worth the money and pretty, and which rattles a good deal, then buy it also; the outside price, £1 10s. I cannot bear these things.

4. A large warm rug, to cover the knees in the carriage; design of a tiger with head and glass eyes; may also be imitation of fox or hippopotamus; any kind of wild animal; I have seen such a one at —, of very soft wool, hardly costing thirty shillings.

If you want to remain a charming sister, then buy all this for me, and send it off directly . . .

Johanna and the children are well. The former would send you her love if she knew I were writing to you. Do not let her suspect it, dear, and good-bye.

Remember Me.

What a precious thing is the perfume, which without any loss to the plant from which it emanates, adheres to the hand of a friend, and follows him in his travels, and recalls to him the beauty of the flower he loves!

The perfume of the soul is memory. It is the sweetest and most delicate part of the heart that detaches itself to cling to another's heart, and follows it everywhere. The affection of the absent is but a perfume; but how sweet and refreshing it is. What comforting thoughts and hopes it brings to the sick and bruised spirit.

GEORGE SAND.

CHAPTER XI.

A RAINY day invariably puts one in the mood for writing letters. Low, hanging clouds make the world seem small—we are shut in with ourselves, and the voice of the rain, penetrating, persuasive, calls forth memory—that delicate perfume of the soul. On such a day, we read over unanswered letters with a wistful feeling of regret. Why have they been neglected, these mute messengers, “that plead for love and look for recompense”—why have their tender entreaties remained so long unanswered?

In looking over such a package of neglected letters, a lonely woman came to one envelope fancifully flowered and scalloped about the edges, as letters used to be some forty years ago. Poor old letter! How worn and yellow and shrivelled it had

grown in all these years of waiting, but its vanities, and affectations, and passionate words of endearment thrilled her with untold memories. Once, before she knew the meaning of pain, she had read this letter with the careless delight of girlhood; now she saw the dim words tremble through shining tears, while tender recollections of long lost and absent friends pressed warm upon her heart. The missive had been sealed with a curious blue wafer, traced in silver letters with these words, "Remember me!"

"Remember me!"—Is not this cry of every human heart, whether uttered imperiously as a command, or tremblingly as an entreaty?

"In hope or fear
Or joy or grief,
Who has not said 'Remember me?'"

To be utterly forgotten, to endure for years the silence of indifference, is to taste a bitterness like that of death. It is useless to complain, or to heap

reproaches upon your friend. Memory will not be rudely awakened. You may call and shout to her all day if you like and she will sleep only the more soundly; but steal in upon her softly, with a strain of music or the scent of a flower, and she will rise up laughing and tell you her dreams. "Why are you so dear to me?" a little German lyric asks of the rainy April evening. Stars tremble through the broken clouds, the warm air is filled with the breath of violets, the friend is conscious of memory stirring in his heart. When the expected letter comes in your friend's own handwriting, what comforting thoughts and hopes it brings to the waiting heart. For the moment your friend himself has returned, to say, with the old familiar look and voice and smile, "See, how I still remember you."

The sullen clouds may close about us with stormy gusts of wind and rain, but we forget the meagre comfort of to-day as we gather with old friends—

the bloom and sweetness of smiling yesterdays, as we walk again in the rose-red gardens of June, warmed with the burning sunlight of happiness. O blessed memories!

"Letters," writes Donald Mitchell, "are the only true heart-talkers."

"Your speech is conventional—your truest thought modified half through its utterance by a look, a sign, a smile, a sneer. It is not individual—it is social and mixed—half of you and half of others."

It is not so with letters—there you are with only the soulless pen and snow-white virgin paper. Your soul is measuring itself by itself, and saying its own sayings. There are no sneers to modify its utterance—no scowls to scare, nothing is present but you and your thought. Utter it freely—write it down—stamp it—burn it in ink—there it is, a true soul-print.

Oh, the glory, the passion, the freedom of a letter!

I have a little packet, not very large,

tied with a narrow, crimson ribbon, now soiled with frequent handling, which far into the winter's night I take down from its nook upon my shelf and untie and open, and run over with such sorrow and such joy, such tears and such smiles as I am sure make me for weeks after a kinder and holier man.

Let me gather up these letters carefully, to be read when the heart is faint and sick of all that is unreal and selfish in the world.

Let me tie them together with a new and longer bit of ribbon—not by a love-knot, that is too hard—but by an easy slipping knot so I may get at them the better. And we will name them, not sentimentally, but earnestly and in the best meaning of the term—

“Remembrances of the heart.”

Samuel Johnson to Mrs. Thrale.

When Mr. and Mrs. Thrale found Johnson at his lodgings one day in one of those terrible fits of melancholy which he says kept him mad half his life, they took him to their own pleasant home at Streatham, where for seventeen years he was always a welcome guest. Mrs. Thrale, a charming and agreeable woman, cheered him with unlimited cups of tea, and was ever willing to bear with his bursts of ill-humor with the utmost kindness and patience. The following letter was written after their friendship had begun to decline:

“Since you have written to me with the attention and tenderness of ancient times, your letters give me a great part of the pleasure which a life of solitude admits. You will never bestow any share of your good-will on one who deserves better. *Those who*

have loved longest love best. A sudden blaze of affection may by a single blast of coldness be extinguished; but that fondness which length of time has connected with many circumstances and occasions, though it may for a while be depressed by disgust or resentment, with or without a cause, is hourly revived by accidental recollection. To those who have been much together, everything heard and everything seen recalls some pleasure communicated, or some benefit conferred, some petty quarrel or some slight endearment, Esteem of great powers, or amiable qualities newly discovered, may embroider a day or a week, but a friendship of twenty years is interwoven with the texture of life. A friend may be often found and lost, but an *old friend* never can be found, and nature has provided that he cannot *easily* be lost."



Silent Conversations.

My letters all dead papers, mute and white !
And yet they seem alive and quivering
Against my tremulous hands which loose the strings
And let them drop down on my knee to-night.
This said, he wished to have me in his sight
Once, as a friend ; this fixed a day in spring
To come and touch my hand—a simple thing,
Yet I wept for it—this—the paper's light—
Said, Dear, I love thee, and I sank and quailed
As if God's future thundered on my past.
This said, I am thine—and so its ink has paled
With lying at my heart that beat too fast ;
And this—O Love, thy words have ill availed,
If what this said I dared repeat at last.

Sonnets From the Portuguese.

CHAPTER XII.

THOMAS À KEMPIS once said, "I am where my thoughts are, and my thoughts are where my affections are." Before this most comfortable reasoning, time and distance shrink away, and our solitude is forgotten as we enter into a long and silent conversation with the friend who is dear.

Suppose this friend to be a young girl, she responds quickly to your own feeling. She is surprised, amused or delighted with all that you have to tell. She reads your letter a dozen times over, and believes every word to be true. In turn, her own letters are frank, mirthful, affectionate, pressed from her fresh young nature by the May-morning mood of gladness. She has never as yet tasted sorrow, neither does she know what instruments of torture these tissue squares, "pent in

their pink covers " may become. Innocent heart; grief with her is only a word to spell, and she sleeps with a letter under her pillow for a talisman.

Has your correspondent reached middle age? She has grown sensible and witty. She begins to understand the meanings of life, and can discourse eloquently upon philosophy, art, poetry, politics, gossip and the weather. By intuition she reads your character, and knows well how your soul may be gratified with nectared speech. You have but one fault to find with this brilliant correspondent. She is occupied with cares of family and society. Her letters, like continued stories, are apt to have long gaps between the numbers. Sometimes she forgets your existence altogether.

In old age, when the dust and turmoil of life have settled away, a sunset of leisure comes on with golden tranquility, and your correspondent returns to you rich in memory, kindly in sympathy, tender in love. Less oc-

cupied with circumstances, and more with thoughts and feelings, she distils her life into her letters, and this is the perfection of art.

"Oh, how she loves me!" Heine cries of his mother. "In her letters I see how her hand trembles, and how her mother-heart is shaken."

We read how children's letters have been an inspiration to great men, and many a young poet and artist has felt his nature break into flower at the touch of sympathy, given so delicately in the letter of some elderly friend.

It was Carlyle's mother who taught herself to write, so passionately did she long for a talk with her "dear, dear son."

The simplest little letter when love writes has strange power to move the heart. Some commercial travelers were sitting about a table one evening when one of them took out a letter addressed in a delicate, girlish handwriting and kissed it. His companions, with laughter, began jeering

rudely, asking from whom his love-letter might be. He answered quietly, "From my best girl." Then, as the jesting continued, he passed the letter to one of the company, who in turn passed it silently to the others. As the dainty, white sheet fluttered from hand to hand, it seemed as if an angel's wing had gone by, and more than one of these men read through trembling tears, these words:

"Dear Papa—I love you, and I pray
for you every night.

Your Best Girl."

There is no weariness when love writes. Gustave Doré expressed his love and gratitude to an aged lady friend in a letter of eighty pages illumined with pen-and-ink sketches by his own hand. Vittoria Colonna, bending over her little gold writing-desk, poured forth her passionate grief to Pescara in thirty-seven stanzas of *terza rime*. Eugénie de Guérin sat by her

open window writing all night to her beloved brother Maurice until the stars had wasted in the rose-light of dawn and the day had replaced her candle.

"'Tis one sign of life and tenderness, this dear writing," she exclaims impetuously. "Let us write to each other then, and do thou write to me."

Writing to his Queen, Charles I. opens his letter with the entreaty:

"Dear Heart, I want the comfort of hearing from you."

How human is this cry.

When ready to faint with loneliness and fatigue, how often has a friendly letter appeared like a tent by the wayside, warmed, lighted, crimson-lined; a shelter from the storm and night.

We hear of friends who during a lifetime of separation have still held each other in a dear embrace through their letters. The wanderer with only his own heart to weep and to smile and to dream with, opens a letter—and behold his friend's thoughts have come speeding after him—in a distant

land, the impulses of love have followed and overtaken him.

Having pen and ink, let us speak to each other then, for as Father Lacordaire has said so wistfully:

“ You know what a need one has of friendly words when one is alone and far away.”

The Winthrop Letters.

The letters of the Winthrops show them to be a family warm in their affections, and of fine sympathetic feeling. Adam Winthrop writes quaintly to his niece, Lady Mildmay:

“Most Kinde Ladie. Yor sweete lettres cominge from the aboundance of yor Love, were joyfully received into the closet of my best affections.”

And again,

“Most Loving Neece, most worthie to be loved and honored alwaies by me—”

“I received pure honye, and not bare words in the letter which you sente unto me.”

Few men ever expressed such depth of feeling and warmth of sympathy in their letters as that grave and stern Puritan, John Winthrop. “My Love, My Joy, My Faithful One,” he calls his wife, “Mine Owne Deare Heart.” And the same loving nature is reflected

in the letters of his wife, Margaret, for as she says truly, "Love liveth by love." How she pities her husband's hurt hand, telling him, "If I had it here, I would make more of it than ever I did and bynde it up softly for fear of hurting it."

Sweet Margaret was wont to forget her dates, but there is a modest little letter dated "10 Apurel."

"My Most Deare Husband—I have no way to manifest my love to you but by these unworthy lines, which I would entreate you to except from hir that loveth you with an unfayned hart."

What exquisite tenderness in Margaret's perplexity, when duty seems to call her one way and love another:

"But I must leave this discourse and go about my household affairs. I am a bad housewife to be so long from them; but I must needs borrow a little time to talk with thee, my sweetheart."

The following letter was written by John Winthrop to his wife Margaret after he had embarked on the *Arabella*

for Massachusetts. It seems to have been agreed that on Mondays and Fridays, "at five of the clock at night," the husband and wife should arise, the one in the old country, the other in the new, and kneel in prayer, forgetting the distance that parted them while they communed with each other in spirit. No lovers could have been more devoted than these two who had then been twelve years wedded.

TO MRS. MARGARET WINTHROP, THE
ELDER, AT GROTON.

From aboard the "Arabella," riding at the Cowes,
March 28, 1630.

My Faithful and Dear Wife:

It pleaseth God that thou shouldst once again hear from me before our departure, and I hope this shall come safe to thy hands. I know it will be a great refreshing to thee. And blessed be His mercy, that I can write thee so good news, that we are all in very good health, and, having tried our ship's

entertainment now more than a week, we find it agrees very well with us. Our boys are well and cheerful, and have no mind of home. They lie both with me, and sleep as soundly in a rug (for we use no sheets here) as ever they did at Groton, and so I do myself, I praise God. The wind hath been against us this week and more; but this day it is come fair to the north, so we are preparing, by God's assistance, to set sail in the morning. We have only four ships ready, and some two or three Hollanders go along with us. The rest of our fleet, being seven ships, will not be ready this sennight. We have spent now two Sabbaths on shipboard very comfortably, God be praised, and are daily more and more encouraged to look for the Lord's presence to go along with us. Henry Kingsbury hath a child or two in the "Talbot" sick of the measles, but like to do well. One of my men had them at Hampton, but he was soon well again.

We are, in all our eleven ships, about seven hundred persons, passengers, and two hundred and forty cows, and about sixty horses. The ship which went from Plymouth carried about one hundred and forty persons, and the ship which goes from Bristowe carrieth about eighty persons. And now (my sweet soul) I must once again take my last farewell of thee in old England. It goeth very near to my heart to leave thee; but I know to whom I have committed thee, even to Him who loves thee much better than any husband can, who hath taken account of the hairs of thy head, and puts all thy tears in His bottle, who can and (if it be for His glory) will bring us together again with peace and comfort. Oh, how it refresheth my heart to think that I shall yet again see thy sweet face in the land of the living!—that lovely countenance that I have so much delighted in, and beheld with so great content. I have hitherto been so much taken up with

business, as I could seldom look back to my former happiness; but now, when I shall be at some leisure, I shall not avoid the remembrance of thee, nor the grief for thy absence. Thou hast thy share with me, but I hope the course we have agreed upon will be some ease to us both. Mondays and Fridays, at five of the clock at night, we shall meet in spirit till we meet in person. Yet, if all these hopes should fail, blessed be our God that we are assured we shall meet one day, if not as husband and wife, yet in a better condition. Let that stay and comfort thy heart. Neither can the sea drown thy husband, nor enemies destroy, nor any adversity deprive thee of thy husband or children. Therefore I will only take thee now and my sweet children in mine arms, and kiss and embrace you all, and so leave you with my God. Farewell, farewell, I bless you all in the name of the Lord Jesus. Pray all for us. Farewell. Commend my blessing to my son John. I can-

not now write to him; but tell him I
have committed thee and thine to him.
Labor to draw him yet nearer to God,
and he will be the surer staff of com-
fort to thee. . . .

Thine wheresoever,

JO. WINTHROP.

Adieu.

With unfeigned good will,
Thine sincerely.
OLD LETTER.

Love me and farewell.
SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

Good-bye, dear lady, and believe
me to be yours in the most friendly
manner.
W. M. THACKERAY.

Oh, how loath I am to bid thee fare-
well, but since it must be, farewell,
my sweet love, farewell.
JOHN WINTHROP.

“Après le bonjour vient l’adieu—ce
triste adieu.”
EUGÉNIE DE GUÉRIN.

CHAPTER XIII.

"I HAVE always a solemn sort of mood upon me closing a letter to you," writes Edward Sill. "I here and you there—the wide earth between us." Lovers, friends, strangers, in every tongue and in every nation have regarded the parting word with tenderness and awe. The Chinese, with a reverent bow to your good words, gravely wishes your future may be prosperous. The Armenian places his best services at your disposal. The Italian writes with a lover's grace, "I most humbly kiss your hands." The more stately Spaniard says "May God preserve you many years." The German friend, with warm home feeling, wishes you may live well, and hopes joy and prosperity may attend you. The old-fashioned English gentleman, with fine courtesy signs him-

self, "Your most faithful and truly affectionate servant." The Frenchman has the manner of a chevalier in his adieu.

"Jusque la recévez, je vous prie, l'assurance de ma parfaite consideration, avec laquelle j'ai l'honneur d'être Monsieur,

Votre tres humble serviteur."

Daniel Webster could have written a love-letter in fewer words, but Daniel Webster parts from his friend with "great respect."

"I cannot return your compliment in kind," Franklin writes upon one occasion, in closing a letter to his English friend, Strahan, "this Quaker plain country producing none. All I can do is to demonstrate by a hearty readiness in serving you when I have an opportunity, or any friend you recommend, that I do truly esteem and love you." In his last letter to this dear old friend, he signs himself, "Your affectionate friend and humble servant."

Letters were never commonplace until the divine idea of humility and service was lost, until this chivalrous spirit—"Ich dien," first became a mere form, and then departed altogether. A man who scrambles out of your presence as hurriedly as possible with "Rsply," shows small respect for his own courtesy. The friend who leaves you abruptly with "Yours, etc.," could, with advantage, exchange his manners for the suave courtesy of a Turk or Chinaman.

"What I want my letters to tell you," writes George Eliot, in closing, "is that I love you truly, gratefully, unchangeably."

Last words should be the best words, sincere in courtesy, faithful in tenderness and love. Says the Baroness de Bunsen: "My mother's parting words have lain like a cordial in my heart." When Agassiz was nearly sixty years old, he wrote, "Good-bye, dear mother. With all my heart—Your Louis." One can believe these warm, affectionate

words gave courage and strength to his old mother's heart.

What visions of Thomas Carlyle's boyhood must have arisen before his tear-dimmed eyes, as he read his mother's trembling words:

"Good-night, Tom, for it is a very stormy night, and I must away to the byre to milk."

Juliet Recamier seems to have pressed all the tenderness of her heart into those last words: "Adieu, I love you." Adieu first, and then, childlike, as if she could not part without one last embrace, "I love you." With a lingering handclasp, Madame de Stael writes: "Adieu, tenderly, sorrowfully, adieu."

"Oh, mother," writes Robert Schumann, "all things come to an end, but my love for you will last forever, and may your motherly love still continue. I am and was and ever shall be, your fond and loving son."

"Oh, love me forever," cries Beethoven, writing to the faithless Coun-

tess Guilietta, and he closes as with a chord of music.

“ Ever thine,
Ever mine,
Ever each others.”

So we come to the farewell word, with assurances of friendship and good-will, with dear memories and a last cry for love, immortal love—or with a prayer as when the pure-hearted maiden Dorothy Plompton bids the good knight, her father, farewell.

“ And thus I beseech Jesu to have you in his blessed keeping to his pleasure, and your heart’s desire and comfort.”

Adieu, good-bye, or God be with you, or the Russian’s entreaty, “Go with God,” are all common enough now, but once they must have been prayers wrung from the very heart.

In his last letter to his Inconnue, written but two hours before his death, Merimee says: “I will write to you soon, I hope, more in detail. Adieu, Je vous embrasse . . .”

So suddenly were the threads cut.
We can never see to the end of our
letter-writing—never say: "This is
the last page—here the story is
ended."

Part II.

Characteristic Letters.

Michael Angelo to Vasari.

MICHAEL ANGELO's grandeur and simplicity of soul are impressed as plainly upon his letters as upon marble, or frescoed walls. Urbino had been more like an intimate friend than a servant, and during his last illness Michael Angelo, then in his eightieth year, nursed him with all the tenderness of a woman. This letter written afterwards to Vasari, so noble in its grief, is inexpressibly touching:

TO MAESTRO GIORGIO VASARI.

My Dear M. Giorgio:

I can write but badly, still I will send you something in answer to your letter. You know that Urbino is dead, wherein I have received great goodness of God, but with heavy loss and infinite suffering to myself. The good-

ness has been that, whereas in life he held to me living, in his death he has taught me to die, not with sorrow, but with a wish for death. I kept him twenty-six years, and have found him of most rare fidelity, and now that I had made him rich, and hoped that he would be the staff and rest of my old age, he has gone from me, nor remains to me any other hope than to meet him in Paradise. And of this God has given us assurance in the happy ending which he made, for his regret was far less of dying than in leaving me in the treacherous world with so many sorrows, so that the better half of me is gone with him, and nothing left to me but sorrow without end. I recommend myself to you.

M. A. B.

Sir Phillip Sidney to Languet.

In the midst of the splendor and dazzling gayeties of the French Court, Sir Philip Sidney was rudely awakened by the horrors of the massacre of St. Bartholomew. Escaping with his life, he turned his steps towards Germany, where, in Frankfort, he made the acquaintance of Hubert Languet, one of the most learned men of his time. Sir Philip was now in his twentieth year, tall and fair, skillful in all manly exercises, and sweet and gentle of manner. In his eager thirst for learning, he gladly seized upon the chance of becoming the companion of such a man as Languet, and the diplomatist, who had neither son or home, found purest pleasure in the society of this shy young Englishman, who proved such a questioner and such a listener. Through years of faithful correspondence, Lan-

guet continued to influence the mind and character of the boy whose beauty and warm affection had stirred the tenderest feeling of the old man's heart. Observe the courtly grace with which Sir Philip Sidney closes his letter. Also that he dates it correctly, putting the day before the month:

Behold at last my letter from Padua! not that you are to expect any greater eloquence than is usually to be found in my epistles, but that you may know I have arrived here as I purposed, and in safety; and I think it right without any delay to write you a few words from hence, for your satisfaction and my own, as far as communication by letter can be satisfactory. Here I am then, and I have already visited his excellency the Count, and the Baron Slavata, your worthy young friends, and while I enjoy their acquaintance with the greatest pleasure to myself, I am perpetually reminded of your surpassing love of me, which you show in

taking so much care not only for me, but for all my concerns and conveniences, and that without any deserving on my part, But you are not a man to be thanked for such a thing; for you are even now meditating greater kindness still, and in truth, as far as I am concerned, much as I am indebted to you, I am only too willing to owe you more. But enough of this.

Your last letter, written on the 1st of January, reached me on the 19th. It brought me no news, for it was filled with instances of your affection, ever pleasant indeed, but long since known and proved, a kind of letter which is of all others delightful and acceptable to me, for while I read, I fancy that I have the very Hubert himself before my eyes and in my hands. I intend to follow your advice about composition, thus: I shall first take one of Cicero's letters and turn it into French; then from French into English, and so once more by a sort of perpetual motion, it shall come round into Latin

again. Perhaps, too, I shall improve myself in Italian by the same exercise. For I have some letters translated into the vulgar tongue by the very learned Paolo Manuzio, and into French by someone else. The volume of Cicero I will read diligently. There are some things also which I wish to learn of the Greeks, which hitherto I have but skimmed on the surface.

.

But more of this when we meet. We have no news here. I look for some from you. Look to your health, for the sake of your friends and all Christendom as well as your own.

Farewell, yours with all my heart,

PHILIP SIDNEY.

Padua, 15th of January, 1574.

To the most excellent and illustrious
Languet.

Always my much esteemed friend,
at Vienna.

Eugénie de Guérin.

Eugénie de Guérin came of an ancient family, noble and poor, living in the south of France. A delicate girl, growing up in the retirement of the ruinous chateau of Le Cayla, she cherished one talent—the power to love. This power of loving seemed to clothe her as with a garment of sunshine and to give everything around her an aspect of brightness and tenderness.

“You love me, I love you,” she says to her friends with touching sweetness, “that gives a charm to everything.”

She only knows the pleasant, simple side of life. She loves to listen to the patter of the rain as she sits by the corner of the fire, tongs in hand making sparks, “those flowers of the chimney,” to feel the “deliciousness of home.” The fields, flowers, birds, the perfumed air—the exchange of

winged thoughts with a friend as they walk under the vine leaves—her little room all tapestried with sunbeams—these things give her the purest pleasure. She asks her soul what it has learned and what it has loved, for every day it loves something, and whatever appears to suffer seems to her as if it had a soul.

“My poor little Nivernais rose-tree,” she writes, “excited my compassion when I saw it, shattered, stoned to death as it were, blossomless and broken, no possibility of rescuing it, the storm came so suddenly.”

Poor Eugénie, she herself, like the Nivernais rose-tree, was to be left broken and blossomless, for with the power of great love comes the possibility of deep, passionate suffering.

She longs for the friends who are far away.

“Let us draw near, my friend, draw near at least in heart and thought, by writing to each other.”

When the letter comes, her hand

fairly trembles with the girlish delight of breaking the seal, and the love and tenderness it brings are to her as the bread of life.

Though living so retired a life in the quiet old chateau of Le Cayla, Eugénie de Guérin had a large correspondence. Every one wished to hear from her, but it is to her brother Maurice, whom she loves with so vivid and tender affection, that she writes letters containing her innermost thoughts—her very soul.

EXTRACTS FROM THE LETTERS OF
EUGÉNIE DE GUÉRIN.

How much happiness a letter brings, and what a charm there is in hearing from those who are far away and whom we cannot see for a long time to come! This voice of the heart brings them near, and seems to say to you, Here they are; in these pages you see their soul and their love, their thoughts, their actions; their whole

being is contained therein; it is the envelope only that is wanting to you.

Yesterday on getting up I saw two swallows skimming the steeple of Saint Salvy. These little heralds of the spring are delightful; one thinks of fine days, of flowers, fruits, grapes, of friends that one will go and see, a whole series of smiling images come flying around with the swallows.

All your kind thoughts arrive one after the other, like a flight of birds into their nest. It is because they know their home is here.

Evening at twilight. I write with a cool hand, having just returned from washing my gown in the brook. It is pleasant to wash there, to watch the passing by of fish, wavelets, blades of grass, leaves, scattered flowers, to follow all that and I know not what besides, down the current. So many things occur to the washerwoman who

knows how to read the secrets of the brook. It is the bath of little birds, the mirror of heaven, the image of life, a running road, the font of baptism.

The ear of the heart is exquisitely fine.

Oh, how much one must suffer near to a happiness one may not possess.

Everything around you interests me, more than that, touches me; my heart is in it. Let me then have tidings of all that belongs to you, the flowers, the garden, and the gardener. You see I make the rounds of your solitude, passing through both thorns and flowers. But 'tis the flowers I pause at. Adieu! I stretch out my arms toward you. . . .

. . . I throw this into the post with no other reason than the pleasure, the necessity I feel of being with you. After God there is nothing, oh my friend! so sweet as a friend.

Robert Schumann to his Mother.

Robert Schumann was so apt to throw his musical feeling into his letters, he complains to Clara Wieck that he cannot compose music and write to her at the same time.

He was tenderly attached to his mother, whose parting words seemed to enfold him like his own good genius, whose letters give him fresh strength, and warm and illumine his heart.

When a law student, he gives this joyous little sketch of his life:

“Jurisprudence alone sometimes touches my mornings with a nipping little hoar-frost. Otherwise it is all sunshine, and everything is gleaming and sparkling like fresh young dew-drops on flowers. Such god-like youth as this depends less on one’s age than on one’s heart.”

In this glad morning-time he writes

the following dream letter to his mother on her birthday, reminding her that a mother's love is the best love, and her child returns it with ardent affection:

LEIPSIK, November 25, 1828.

This is the very first time, dearest mother, that I have not shaken hands with you on your birthday, but to me it is just the same red-letter day, as it used to be when I was a child, and gave you a nosegay, and whispered my childish wishes. It is rather too bad that on this day, of all others, I must begin by asking your forgiveness for not having written any verses. . . But nevertheless, I am sending you a poem, dream, vision, or whatever you like to call it.

I went to sleep very sorrowfully. Dreams hovered about me, until my good genius exclaimed: "Your mother's birthday is near." Then my visions took definite shape, and I dreamed that a world of hearts lay be-

fore me. Crushed and penitent souls flitted hither and thither, and those who had been saved and sealed hovered round them, and gently soothed their sorrows. Then from the East, there came a deep voice, clear and sweet as a bell, and the question thrilled through every heart—"Whose love endures the longest?" Oh, how all the souls trembled at that sweet question! they crowded around, and each one said, "Mine." Aeolian harps accompanied the voices, and a blissful dawn rested on all the blossoms. And again the voice was heard, "Whose love endures the longest?" and the hearts of Friendship came forward and said: "A friend's love endures the longest, for it is unobtrusive and unconstrained." But a wounded soul came flying from the West, and her murmured words sounded like a far-away echo: "Alas, I was deceived in my friend's love, for it was very selfish." Then all the souls quivered and shrank back before the question of

that wounded soul. And again the voice from the East rang out:—"Whose love endures the longest?" And the hearts of Early Love appeared and said: "The lover's love endures the longest, for it is the most ardent of any." But as they were declaring this so joyfully, and young hearts began once more to think of this beautiful world and the sunny spring-time of first love, a down-trodden heart struggled out of the West, and sadly moaned—"Not that love either, for my love only caused me tears of grief, and then left me alone with my sorrows, and my young heart was withered." And once more it flashed from the East, but there was sorrow and anger in the voice, as the great question again ran through the realm: "Is there no love that endures the longest?" And behold, a heart that had been lost and saved again, spoke and said: "A mother's love endures the longest, because she loves unselfishly." Ah, then there was no soul to

come forward and say, "I was not loved in this way," and all the hearts engaged in a loving strife, and all cried "Yes, a mother's love endures the longest," and they were joyful, and thought of all the affectionate tears, so consoling and warning, which their mothers had shed for them in the world. And the blossoms and flowers waved, and the Æolian harps sounded, and all the heart-strings echoed the joyful words—"Mother's love endures the longest."

My dream was over, and when I awoke my heart felt comforted, and I was murmuring to myself, "Mother's love endures the longest," but I was still half asleep, and another voice seemed to whisper the answer: "And the child returns that love with an ardent affection." . . .

Sydney Smith to his Wife.

It was Sydney Smith's mother who wrote such delightful letters to her sons at school that all the other boys used to gather round to hear them read. The following letter from Sydney Smith to his wife gives us a flavor of the personality of this genial gentleman, whose pure, sparkling wit and kindly heart made his companionship a continual feast:

Dearest Kate:

I went over yesterday to the Tate's at Edmonton. The family consists of three delicate daughters, an aunt, the old lady, and her son, the curate of Edmonton; the old lady was in bed. I found there a physician, an old friend of Tate's, attending them for friendship, who had come from London for that purpose. They were in

●

/

daily expectation of being turned out from house and curacy. . . I began by enquiring the character of their servant; then turned the conversation upon their affairs, and expressed a hope the Chapter might ultimately do something for them.

I then said, it is my duty to state to you (for they were all assembled) that I have given away the living of Edmonton, and have written to our Chapter clerk this morning, to mention the person to whom I have given it; and I must also tell you that I am sure he will appoint his own curate. (A general silence and dejection.) It is a very odd coincidence, I added, that the gentleman I have selected is a namesake of this family; his name is Tate. Have you any relations of that name? No, we have not. And by a more singular coincidence his name is Thomas Tate; in short, I added, there is no use in mincing the matter, you are the vicar of Edmonton. They all burst into tears, and I wept and

.

groaned for a long time. Then I rose, and said it was very likely to end in their keeping a buggy, at which we all laughed as violently.

The poor old lady, who was sleeping in a garret because she could not bear to enter the room lately inhabited by her husband, sent for me and kissed me, sobbing with a thousand emotions. The charitable physician wept too. . .

I never passed so remarkable a morning, nor was more deeply impressed with the sufferings of human life, and never felt more thoroughly the happiness of doing good.

God bless you!

SYDNEY SMITH.

Letters of Robert Burns.

Some one has said that no one ever lived who was so truly loved as Robert Burns. His heart was so warm, the blood rushed so impetuously through his veins, even the touch of his hand burned. His letters, like himself, were human and faulty, but rich in feeling and humor, and filled with that ardent and penetrating spirit which sheds light and communicates importance to all that it touches.

During his stay in Edinburgh, where the homes of the rich and noble were open to him, and he tasted for a brief time the sweetness of prosperity, the following letter was addressed to his publisher's daughter, Margaret Chalmers, and her friend Charlotte:

EDINBURGH, Nov. 21, 1787.

I have one vexatious fault to find with the kindly welcome, well-filled

sheet, which I owe to your and Charlotte's goodness—it contains too much sense, sentiment and good spelling.

It is impossible that even you two, whom I declare I will give credit for any degree of excellence the sex are capable of attaining, it is impossible you can go on to correspond at that rate, so like those who, Shenstone says, retire because they have made a good speech, I shall, after a few letters, hear no more of you. I insist that you shall write whatever comes first, what you see, what you read, what you hear, what you admire, what you dislike, trifles, bagatelles, nonsense; or, to fill up a corner, e'en put down a laugh at full length. Now, none of your polite hints about flattery; I leave that to your lovers, if you have or shall have any; though, thank heaven, I have found two girls who can be luxuriously happy in their own minds with one another, without that commonly necessary appendage to female bliss—a lover. Charlotte and you are

just two favorite resting-places for my soul in her wanderings through the weary, thorny wilderness of this world. God knows I am ill-fitted for the struggle; I glory in being a poet, and I want to be thought a wise man—I would fondly be generous, and I wish to be rich. After all, I am afraid I am a lost subject. “Some folks has a hantle o’ faults, an’ I’m but a ne’er-doweel.”

Afternoon.—To close the melancholy reflections at the end of the last sheet, I shall just add a piece of devotion commonly known in Carrick by the title of the Webster’s grace:

“Some say we’re thieves, and e’en sae are we!
Some say we lie, and e’en sae do we!
Gude forgie us, and I hope sae will He!
Up and to your looms, lads.”

R. B.

Returning to his plow and the farm at Ellisland, Robert Burns writes to a friend: “For that pleasurable part of life called social communication, I am

here at the very elbow of existence,"—but he had the companionship of his "darling Jean," and was still courting his "old, capricious but good-natured hussy of a muse." The following New Years' letter to his friend, Mrs. Dunlop, reveals to us one of the finer moods of this sensitively wrought spirit. It is Burns, the poet, who hangs with delight over a mountain daisy or wild briar rose; who hears the whistle of a curlew, or the cadence of a flock of plover with an elevation of soul, and who feels that a sunny spring day, or a bright autumn noon, call for especial acts of devotion:

ELLISLAND, New Year-day Morning, 1789.

This, dear Madam, is a morning of wishes, and would to God that I came under the apostle James' description—the prayer of a righteous man availeth much. In that case, Madam, you should welcome in a year full of blessings: everything that obstructs or disturbs tranquility and self-enjoyment

should be removed, and every pleasure that frail humanity can taste should be yours. I own myself so little a Presbyterian that I approve of set times and seasons of more than ordinary acts of devotion, for breaking in on that habituated routine of life and thought which is apt to reduce our existence to a kind of instinct, or even sometimes with some minds to a state very little superior to mere machinery.

I believe I owe this to that glorious paper in the *Spectator*, "The Vision of Mirza," a piece that struck my young fancy, before I was capable of fixing an idea to a word of three syllables: "On the fifth day of the moon, which according to the custom of my forefathers, I always kept holy, after having washed myself and offered my morning devotions, I ascended the high hill of Bagdad, in order to pass the rest of the day in meditation and prayer."

We know nothing or next to noth-

ing of the substance or structure of our souls, so cannot account for those seeming caprices in them that one should be particularly pleased with this thing, or struck with that, which on minds of a different cast, makes no extraordinary impression.

I have some favorite flowers in spring, among which are the mountain daisy, the hare-bell, the fox-glove, the wild briar rose, the budding birch, and the hoary hawthorn, that I view and hang over with particular delight.

I never hear the loud solitary whistle of the curlew in a summer noon, or the wild mixing cadence of a troop of gray plovers in an autumnal morning, without feeling an elevation of soul like the enthusiasm of devotion or poetry.

Tell me, my dear friend, to what can this be owing?

Are we a piece of machinery, which like the Æolian harp, passive, takes the impression of the passing accident?

Or do these working argue some-

thing within us above the trodden
clod? I own myself partial to such
proofs of those awful and important
realities—a God that made all things,
man's immaterial and immortal nature
—and a world of weal or woe beyond
death and the grave. R. B.

Mrs. Carlyle to ———

This fragment of a letter discloses the young wife in her little kitchen at Craigenputtock, watching through the lonely hours of the night, the baking of a loaf of bread. Her body is aching with weariness, her heart with a sense of forlornness and degradation, until maddened with despair she drops her head on the table and sobs aloud. A great comforting thought then comes to her, lifting her up as with the wings of an angel, and Jane Carlyle reveals to us the nobler, more heroic quality of her nature.

. . . "Knowing nothing about the process of fermentation, or heat of ovens, it came to pass that my loaf of bread got into the oven at the time when myself ought to have been put into bed, and I remained the only person

not asleep in a house in the middle of a desert. One o'clock struck, and then two, and then three, and still I was sitting there in an immense solitude, my whole body aching with weariness, my heart aching with a sense of forlornness and degradation, that I who had been so petted at home, who had never been required to do anything but cultivate my mind, should have to pass all these hours of the night in watching a loaf of bread—which might not turn out bread after all! Such thoughts maddened me, till I laid my head down on the table and sobbed aloud. It was then that somehow the idea of Benvenuto Cellini sitting up all night watching his Perseus in the furnace came into my mind, and suddenly I asked myself, "After all, in the sight of the Upper Powers, what is the mighty difference between a statue of Perseus and a loaf of bread; so that each be the thing one's hand has found to do. The man's determined will, his en-

ergy, his patience, his resource, were the really admirable things of which his statue of Perseus was the mere chance expression. If he had been a woman living at Craigenputtock, with a dyspeptic husband, sixteen miles from a baker, and he a bad one, all these qualities would have come out more fitly in a loaf of bread. I cannot express what consolation this germ of an idea spread over my uncongenial life during the years we lived at that savage place.

Eliza Southgate to Moses Porter.

Eighty years ago, Eliza Southgate wrote such charming letters to her friends, that they have been gathered together and handed down to her children's children as a beloved inheritance. In this lively letter written to her cousin, Moses Porter, the words come so fresh from her heart the impulsive girl all unconsciously gives us her real self, with indignation glowing in her cheeks, and laughing, friendly mischief shining in her eyes:

TOPSHAM, Oct. 29, 1801.

Why, you unaccountable wretch! you obstinate fellow! you malicious, you vain, you—oh, I am run out. I will e'en call in the assistance of Sir John Falstaff to help me exclaim against you—provoking creature! With one scratch of your pen to ban-

ish such delightful thoughts. I was applauding myself for my *condescension* in writing so often without answers. I exulted in the thought of your shame and confusion at the proofs of my superiority—so much above the little forms that narrowed your own heart. How did I see you hanging your head with penitence and sorrow, while your face glowed with conscious shame! O, 'twas delicious! Every day I reflected on it with renewed pleasure. I felt assured nothing prevented your writing but an aversion to acknowledging how humble, how little you felt—yet the letter at length arrived, my heart trembled with delight, a glow of triumph flushed my face. I saw the humiliation so grateful to my vanity (I was at the *Lieu table*)—I hurried the letter into my pocket; I had no wish to read it—I knew (I thought I did) what it must contain. I could scarcely breathe; vanity, exultation, revenge (sweet sensation) gave me unusual spirits. I

stood and called five—I was sure of a Palm-flush! 't was impossible anything could go wrong—'t was a frail hope—I got nothing, was lieud; never mind it, thought I, the letter is enough. I played wrong, discarded the wrong card, knocked over the candlestick, spilt my wine; positively, if it had been a love letter, a first declaration, it would not have put me in a worse frustration; but ah! 't was so different—I did not blush, look down, tremble, fear to raise my eyes; my heart did not dissolve away in melting tenderness—hey-day! I had no notion of telling you what I did *not* do—but what I *did*. Well, then—I sat so upright I was a foot taller; I looked at everybody for applause. I wondered I did not hear them exclaim: Oh, generous, excellent girl! . I demanded it with my eyes—'t was all in vain; I heard nothing but, “Eliza, you must follow suit. Why do you play that card? You will certainly be lieud.” I was vexed; I thought of the letter,

all was sunshine again. I am called—dinner; oh, this eating seems to clog all my faculties. I never write with half so much ease as when I'm half starved. I believe it is true that poets ought not to live well.

But begging your pardon for leaving you so in the lurch, I had forgotten that the letter was as yet unopened in my pocket. Well, then, we did not break up till late; after I retired to bed out came the letter. I was sleepy and had a great mind not to open it till morning; however, I thought I would, to have the satisfaction of the confirmation of my hopes, not once thinking of the stroke that should annihilate them. It came. How shall I tell you my consternation!—"description falters at the threshold;" yet I did not rave, I did not tear my hair with a frenzy of passion. I did not stand in mute despair—no; I collected all my dignity, and stood fixed and immovable. I was convinced 't was obstinacy alone, 't was envy, 't was a

something that prevented you from giving me what you knew I deserved. I am called again.

Ratbaniel Hawthorne to Sophia Peabody.

In this June letter to his betrothed, so pure and childlike in its humility, Hawthorne's sensitive nature is bathed in the clearest sunlight of love:

June 22, 1840.

Belovedest, what a letter! Never was so much beauty poured out of any heart before; and to read it over and over is like bathing my brow in a fresh fountain, and drinking draughts that renew the life within me. Nature is kind and motherly with you, and takes you into her innermost heart and cherishes you there, because you look on her with holy and loving eyes. How can you say that I have ever written anything beautiful, being yourself so potent to reproduce whatever is loveliest? If I did not know that you loved me, I should even be ashamed

before you. Worthy of you I am not; but you will make me so, for there will be time or eternity enough for your blessed influence to work on me. Would that we could build our cottage this very summer amid these scenes of Concord which you describe. My heart thirsts and languishes to be there, away from the hot sun, and the coal dust, and the steaming docks, and the thick-pated, stubborn, contentious men with whom I brawl from morning till night, and all the weary toil that quite engrosses me, and yet occupies only a small part of my being, which I did not know existed before I became a measurer. I do think I should sink down quite disheartened and inanimate if you were not happy, and gathering from earth and sky enjoyment for both of us; but this makes me feel that my real, innermost soul is apart from all these unlovely circumstances, and that it has not ceased to exist, as I might sometimes suspect, but is nourished and kept alive through you. You

know not what comfort I have in thinking of you, amid those beautiful scenes, and amid those sympathetic hearts. If you are well and happy, if your step is light and joyous there, and your cheek is becoming rosier, and if your heart makes pleasant music, then is it not better for you to stay there a little longer? And if better for you, is it not better for me likewise!

This morning I rose early to finish measuring a load of coal; which being accomplished, and Colonel Hall perceiving that my energies were somewhat exhausted by the heat, and by much brawling with the coal people, did send me home immediately for dinner. So then I took a nap, with a volume of Spenser in my hand, and awaking at four, I re-re-re-perused your letter, and sat down to pour myself out to thee, and in so doing, dearest, I have had great comfort.

Now, good-bye: you have our whole

treasure of happiness in your keeping.
Keep it safe and add to it continually.
God bless you.

**The Rev. Charles Kingsley to Mr.
Wood.**

Charles Kingsley, at the opening of his curate life, found himself in the lonely little parish of Eversley. He describes his large, low front room, with its drab curtains and large bow window, "where I sit, poor me, solitary in one corner." From this room, looking out over the moorlands and fir-trees, those "delicious, self-sown firs," he probably wrote the following plaintive appeal to his old college friend:

EVERSLEY, 1842.

Peter!—Whether in the glaring saloons of Almacks, or making love in the equestrian stateliness of the park, or the luxurious recumbency of the ottoman, whether breakfasting at one or going to bed at three, thou art still

Peter, the beloved of my youth, the staff of my academic days, the regret of my parochial retirement: Peter! I am alone! Around me are the everlasting hills, and the everlasting bores of the country! My parish is peculiar for nothing but want of houses and abundance of peat bogs; my parishioners, remarkable only for aversion to education, and a predilection for fat bacon. I am wasting my sweetness on the desert air—I say my sweetness, for I have given up smoking, and smell no more. Oh, Peter, Peter, come down and see me! O that I could behold your head towering above the fir-trees that surround my lonely dwelling. Take pity on me! I am like a kitten in the wash-house copper with the lid on! And Peter, prevail on some of your friends here to give me a day's trout-fishing, for my hand is getting out of practice. But, Peter, I am, considering the oscillations and perplex circumgurgitations of this piecemeal world, an improved man. I am

much more happy, much more comfortable, reading, thinking, and doing my duty, much more than ever I did before in my life. Therefore, I am not discontented with my situation or regretful that I buried my first-class in a country curacy, like the girl who shut herself up in a bandbox on her wedding-night (vide Roger's Italy.) And my lamentations are not general (for I do not want an inundation of the froth and tide-wash of Babylon the Great), but particular, being solely excited by want of thee, oh Peter, who are very pleasant to me, and wouldst be more so if thou wouldst come and eat my mutton, and drink my wine, and admire my sermons some Sunday at Eversley.

Your faithful friend,

BOANERGES ROAR-AT-THE-CLOUDS.

**William M. Thackeray to Mrs.
Brookfield.**

Those who look for fine, polished style will be disappointed in these hurried, carelessly-written letters—letters that have the charm of real conversation in their swiftly-changing moods, playful humor and tender little fancies, as when he says good-bye to Baby Brookfield in small letters, as if he must lower his voice in speaking to the tiny maiden. As with handclasp and smile, these letters reveal the untiring gentleness, sweetness of temper and kindly human feeling of the warm-hearted friend.

(Fragment.)

Paris, 1851.

A STORY WITH A MORAL.

Last night I went to a party at the house of my mother's friend, Madame Colemache, (who introduced me to

Madame Ancelot, the authoress, who was dying to see me, said Madame Colemache, only I found on talking to Madame Ancelot that she didn't know who I was, and so was no more dying than the most lively of us), and coming down-stairs with my ma, I thought to myself, "I will go home and have an hour's chat with her, and try and cheer and console her," for her sad, tragic looks melted my heart, and always make me think I am a cruel monster; and so I was very tender and sentimental, and you see, caressed her filially as we went down. It was a wet night and the fly was waiting, and she was just going to step in—but there entered at the house door a fiddler with a fiddle under his arm, whom when old *Mater Dolorosa* beheld, she said "O! that is Monsieur *un tel*, who has come to play a duo with Laure; I must go back and hear him." And back she went, and all my sentimentality was gulped down, and I came home and sent the fly back two miles

for her, with Jeames to escort her in the rain. The moral is, that women with those melancholy eyes and sad, sad looks, are not always so melancholy as they seem; they have consolations—amusements and fiddlers. &c.

As for my dear young ones, I am as happy with them as possible. Annie is a fat lump of pure gold, the kindest, dearest creature, as well as a wag of the first water. It is an immense blessing that heaven has given me such an artless, affectionate companion. We were looking at a beautiful, smiling, innocent view at Berne, on Saturday, and she said, "It's like Baby Brookfield." There's for you! and so it was like innocence and brightness, and &c. &c. Oh! may she never fall in love absurdly and marry an ass! If she will but make her father her confidant, I think the donkey won't keep his ground long in her heart. And so the paper is full and must go to England without ever saying so much as

“thank you” for your letter. Good-bye, my dear lady, Good-bye, Miss Brookfield, Good-bye, Mr. Brookfield, says your affectionate

W. M. T.

Au Suisse, July 21st.

Washington Irving to Mr. Hoffman.

In this letter to Mr. Hoffman, Washington Irving gives an account of a journey with Mrs. Hoffman and her three children in a coach to Philadelphia. It is a fine example of the humor that sparkles through the correspondence of this polished writer.

Philadelphia, June 10, 1810.

Dear Sir:

We arrived safe in Philadelphia this morning, between eight and nine o'clock, and took the city by surprise, the inhabitants not having expected us until evening. All this is in consequence of my unparalleled generalship, which already begins to be talked of with great admiration throughout the country. I took a light coachee from Brighton to Brunswick, where we breakfasted, and finding it impossible

to procure a four-horse carriage there, I changed carriage and horses and pushed on to Trenton, where, while the Philistines were dining, I engaged a fresh carriage and horses for Philadelphia, and made out to reach Homesburg (about ten miles from Philadelphia) between seven and eight in the evening. I was anxious to get as far as possible, lest the weather might change, or the children get unwell. The journey has been infinitely more comfortable and pleasant than I had expected. Yesterday was a fine day for traveling, and I never knew children to travel so well.

Little Julia has had an astonishing variety of complaints since leaving New York, has had two doctors to attend her, has taken three score and ten doses of medicine, not to mention anise seed tea and peppermint cordial, and what is passing strange, is still alive, fat and hearty; a case only to be paralleled by the famous spinster of Rat-

cliffe Highway, who was cured of nineteen diseases in a fortnight, and every one of them mortal.

You cannot conceive what speculation our appearance made among the yeomanry of Jersey and Pennsylvania. Many of the old Dutch farmers mistook us for a family of Yankee squatters, and were terribly alarmed, and the little community of Bustletown (who are very apt to be thrown into a panic) were in utter dismay at our approach, insomuch that when we entered one end of the town, I saw several old women in Pompadour and Birdseye gowns, with bandboxes under their arms, making their escape out of the other. However, I contrived to pacify them by letting them know it was the family of the Recorder of New York, who, being an orthodox Bible man, always traveled into foreign lands, as did the patriarchs of yore—that is to say, with his wife and his sons, and his daughters, his men-servants and his maid-servants, and his cattle,

and the stranger that is within his gates; and everything that is his, whereat they were exceeding glad and glorified God.

In the hurry of writing the above (for I write as fast as we traveled) I forgot to mention to you that having safely arrived within the suburbs of Philadelphia, the old carriage in which we came from Trenton sank beneath its burden, and gave up the ghost!

In other words, we broke down just after entering the city; but as it was merely a spring had given away, the whole party, man, woman, and child, were dug out of the ruins without any other mishap than that of overturning the medicine chest, and spilling fifteen phials, which were as full of plagues as those mentioned in the Revelations. I immediately perceived a change in little Julia for the better, and I make bold to conjecture that had a dozen more been demolished, she would have been the heartiest child in

Philadelphia at this present writing. You cannot imagine the astonishment of all Philadelphia at seeing so many living beings extracted out of one little carriage.

Farewell, my good sir. Remember me to the remnants and rags of your household that remain behind. Keep all marauders from breaking into my room and disturbing the pictures of my venerable ancestors, and believe me,

Ever your friend,
W. I.

2

.

.

2





3 6105 010 510 563

STANFORD UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
CECIL H. GREEN LIBRARY
STANFORD, CALIFORNIA 94305-6004
(415) 723-1493

All books may be recalled after 7 days

DATE DUE

MAR 27 1999
66610

JUN 30 2004

JUN 29 2004

